opy for the Elected Office (EO/US) PENT COOPERATION TREAT

PCT

To:

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING OF A CHANGE

(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

JORRITSMA, Ruurd Nederlandsch Octrooibureau Scheveningesweg 82 P.O. Box 29720 NL-2502 LS The Hague PAYS-BAS

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 05 October 2001 (05.10.01)	PATS-BAS
Applicant's or agent's file reference BO 42677	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
International application No. PCT/NL00/00473	International filing date (day/month/year) 05 July 2000 (05.07.00)
The following indications appeared on record concerning: X the applicant X the inventor	the agent the common representative
Name and Address	State of Nationality State of Residence NL NL
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÷.	Facsimile No.
	Teleprinter No.
2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the the person X the name the address the address that the second the second the second that the second the second that the sec	
Name and Address BRUIJS, Petrus, Adrianus Gershwinstraat 1	State of Nationality State of Residence NL NL Telephone No.
NL-2807 SG Gouda Netherlands	Total total
	Facsimile No.
	Teleprinter No.
3. Further observations, if necessary:	
4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:	
X the receiving Office	the designated Offices concerned
the International Searching Authority	X the elected Offices concerned
the International Preliminary Examining Authority	other:

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Authorized officer

Dominique DELMAS

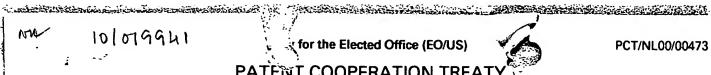
Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38

Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35

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To:

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY



From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING OF A CHANGE (PCT Rule 92bis.1 and Administrative Instructions, Section 422) Date of mailing (day/month/year) 11 January 2002 (11.01.02)	Ned Scho P.O. NL-2	RITSMA, Ruurd erlandsch Octrooibure: eveningesweg 82 Box 29720 2502 LS The Hague S-BAS	au
Applicant's or agent's file reference BO 42677		IMPORTANT NOT	FICATION
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The following indications appeared on record concerning: X the applicant X the inventor	the age	nt the commo	on representative
Name and Address		State of Nationality	State of Residence
FRINGS, Helanus, Elisabeth, Rudolph Van Bleiswijkstraat 83		NL Telephone No.	NL
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Netherlands		Facsimile No.	-
		Teleprinter No.	
2 Fushershaming Wassess			
3. Further observations, if necessary:			
4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:			
X the receiving Office		the designated Offices	concerned
the International Searching Authority	[X the elected Offices cond	erned
the International Preliminary Examining Authority	[other:	
	Authorized	officer	
The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes		Ki-Nam HA	
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland			
Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	felephone	No.: (41-22) 338.83.38	

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REQUEST

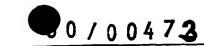
EUREAU VOOR DE INDUSTRIÈLE EIGENDU J ROIL INTERNATIONAL APPLICA (1.0)

The undersigned requests that the present international application be processed

"PCT International Application"

according to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.	Name of receiving Office and PCT International Application
according to the Fateur Cooperation	Applicant's or agent's file reference (if desired) (12 characters maximum) BO 42677
Installation and method for updati	ng an address database with recorded address records
Box No. II APPLICANT	
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name: for designation. The address must include postal code and name of address indicated in this Box is the applicant is State (that is, cour of residence is indicated below.) PTT POST HOLDINGS B.V. Prinses Beatrixlaan 23 NL-2595 AK DEN HAAG the Netherlands	This person is also inventor. Telephone No. Teleprinter No.
2 Laf aviagality:	State (that is, country) of residence:
State (that is, country) of nationality: the Netherlands (NL)	the Netherlands (NL)
This person is applicant all designated for the purposes of:	gnated States except the United States the States indicated in the States of America only the Supplemental Box
Box No. III FURTHER APPLICANT(S) AND/OR (FU	URTHER) INVENTOR(S)
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name: I designation. The address must include postal code and name of address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, coof residence is indicated below.) BEZUIJEN, Peter Christoffel Le Tourmalet 39 NL-1060 NX AMSTERDAM the Netherlands	This person is: This person is: applicant only applicant and inventor inventor only (If this check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)
State (that is, country) of nationality:	State (that is, country) of residence:
the Netherlands (NL)	the Netherlands (NL)
This person is applicant all designated all designated the Ut	signated States except nited States of America of America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box
Further applicants and/or (further) inventors are indicated and inventors are indicated as a second and inventors are indicated as a second and inventors are indicated as a second as a s	cated on a continuation sheet.
	TIVE; OR ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE
The person identified below is hereby/has been appointed to of the applicant(s) before the competent International Author	o act on behalf orities as:
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; designation. The address must include po	
JORRITSMA, Ruurd et al Nederlandsch Octrooibureau Scheveningseweg 82, P.O. Box 29720	Facsimile No. 70 3527528
NL-2502 LS THE HAGUE	Teleprinter No.
THE NETHERLANDS	
Address for correspondence: Mark this check-box space above is used instead to indicate a special address.	where no agent or common representative is/has been appointed and the ess to which correspondence should be sent.
Form PCT/PO/101 (first sheet) (July 1998; reprint lanuary)	

Sheet N PCT/NI



C ntinuation of B x N . III FURTHER APPLICANT(S) AND/OR (FURTHER) INVENTOR(S)		
If none of the following sub-boxes is used, this sheet should not be included in the request.		
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name: for a legal entity designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The caddress indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of resident of residence is indicated below.) BRANDT, Dick Schadeken 189 NL-2264 KL LEIDSCHENDAM the Netherlands		
State (that is, country) of nationality: State (the state (that is, country))	hat is, country) of residence:	
the Netherlands (NL) th	e Netherlands (NL)	
This person is applicant for the purposes of: all designated all designated the United States of Am	the United States of America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box	
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of residence of residence is indicated below.) VAN WESTBROEK, Erik Wilhelmus Gilles Knobbelzwaansingel 5 NL-2633 AG NOOTDORP the Netherlands	This person is: applicant only applicant and inventor inventor only (If this check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)	
State (that is, country) of nationality: State (that is, country) of residence:	
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This person is applicant for the purposes of: all designated all designated the United States except the United States of Am	the United States of America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box	
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name: for a legal entity designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of reside of residence is indicated below.) VAN DER VEER, Marco Gerardus Swaenepol 9A NL-6871 TN RENKUM the Netherlands	This person is: applicant only applicant and inventor inventor only (If this check-bax is marked, do not fill in below.)	
State (that is, country) of nationality: State	(that is, country) of residence:	
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Name and address: (Family name followed by given name: for a legal enti- designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of resid of residence is indicated below.) NAUTA, Frank Auke Goedenregenzoom 154 2719 HE ZOETERMEER the Netherlands	This person is: applicant only applicant and invent r inventor only (If this check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)	
	(that is, country) of residence: e Netherlands (NL)	
This person is applicant for the purposes of: all designated States except the United States of America only the Supplemental Box		
Further applicants and/or (further) inventors are indicated on another continuation sheet.		



ntinuation of B x N . III FURTHER APPLICANT(S) AND/OR (FURTHER) IN	VENTOR(S)
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fame and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official lesignation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The country of the address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of residence if no State (residence is indicated below.) FRINGS, Helanus Elisabeth Rudolph Van Bleiswijkstraat 83 NL-2582 LA DEN HAAG the Netherlands	This person is: applicant nly applicant and inventor inventor only (If this Check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)
This person is applicant all designated states of America of r the purposes of:	of residence: ands (NL) e United States America only the States indicated in the Supplemental Box
Name and address: (Family name followed by given name; for a legal entity, full official designation. The address must include postal code and name of country. The country of the address indicated in this Box is the applicant's State (that is, country) of residence if no State of residence is indicated below.) BRUIJS, Petrus Adrianua Gershwinstraat 1 NL-2807 SG GOUDA the Netherlands	This person is: applicant only applicant and inventor inventor only (If this check-box is marked, do not fill in below.)
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This person is applicant all designated all designated States except for the purposes of:	the United States of America only the Supplemental Bo
Further applicants and/or (further) inventors are indicated on another continuation	sheet.

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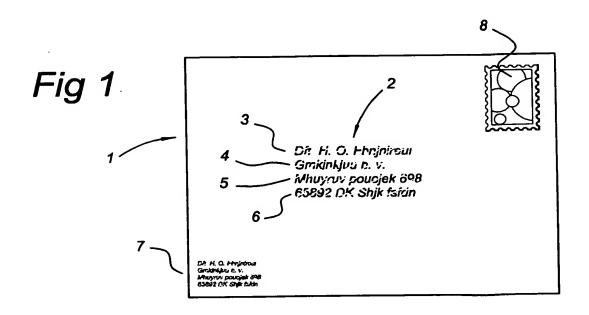
Precautionary Designation Statement: In addition to the designations made above, the applicant also makes under Rule 4.9(b) all other designations which would be permitted under the PCT except any designation(s) indicated in the Supplemental Box as being excluded from the scope of this statement. The applicant declares that those additional designations are subject to confirmation and that any designation which is not confirmed before the expiration of 15 months from the priority date is to be regarded as withdrawn by the applicant at the expiration of that time limit. (Confirmation (including fees) must reach the receiving Office within the 15-month time limit.)

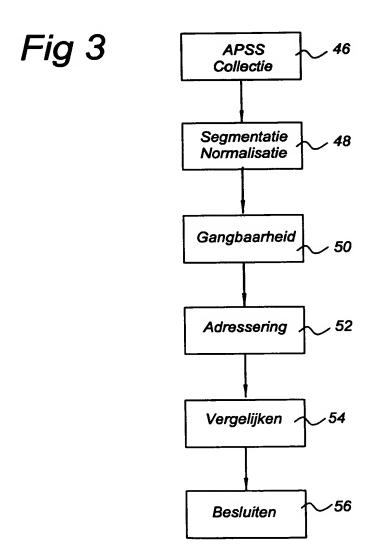
00/00473 Sheet No. . 5 . . **P** indicated in the Supplemental B x. Further priority claim PRIORITY CLAIM Box N . VI Where earlier applicatin is: Number Filing date of earlier application of earlier application regional application:* international applicati n: nati nal application: (day/monta/year) regional Office receiving Office country item (1) juli 1999 1012519 the Netherlands 2 9. 09. item (2) 29 September 1999 the Netherlands 1013177 item (3) The receiving Office is requested to prepare and transmit to the International Bureau a certified copy of the earlier application(s) (only if the earlier application was filed with the Office which for the purposes of the present international application is the receiving Office) identified above as item(s): * Where the earlier application is an ARIPO application, it is mandatory to indicate in the Supplemental Box at least one country party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property for which that earlier application was filed (Rule 4.10(b)(ii)). See Supplemental Box. Box No. VII INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY Request to use results of earlier search; reference to that search (if an earlier Choice of International Searching Authority (ISA) search has been carried out by or requested from the International Searching Authority): (if two or more International Searching Authorities are competent to carry out the international search, indicate Country (or regional Office) the Authority chosen; the two-letter code may be used): Number Date (day/month/year) the Netherlands SN 33491 NL ISA / EPA 13 April 2000 Box No. VIII CHECK LIST; LANGUAGE OF FILING This international application is accompanied by the item(s) marked below: This international application contains the following number of sheets: 1. Effect calculation sheet : 5 (NL) request 2. separate signed power of attorney description (excluding 17 (NL)3. copy of general power of attorney; reference number, if any: sequence listing part) 4.

statement explaining lack of signature : 6 (NL) claims 5. priority document(s) identified in Box No. VI as item(s): abstract : 1 (NL) 6. translation of international application into (language): drawings : 4 (NL) 7.

separate indications concerning deposited microorganism or other biological material sequence listing part f description 8.

nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing in computer readable form copy search report Total number of sheets: 33 9. other (specify): Language of filing of the Figure of the drawings which international application: English should accompany the abstract: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR AGENT Box No. IX Next to each signature, indicate the name of the person signing and the capacity in which the person signs (if such capacity is not obvious from reading the request). JORRITSMA, R. Nederlandsch Octrooibureau, The Hague, 5 July 2000 For receiving Office use only 05 JUL 2000 2. Drawings: Date of actual receipt of the purported 0 5. 07. 00 international application: received: Corrected date of actual receipt due to later but timely received papers or drawings completing the purported international application: Date of timely receipt of the required corrections under PCT Article 11(2): not received: Transmittal of search c py delayed 5. International Searching Authority ISA / until search fee is paid. (if two or more are competent): For International Bureau use only Date freceipt of the record copy 07 AUGUST 2000 (07.08.00) by the International Bureau:





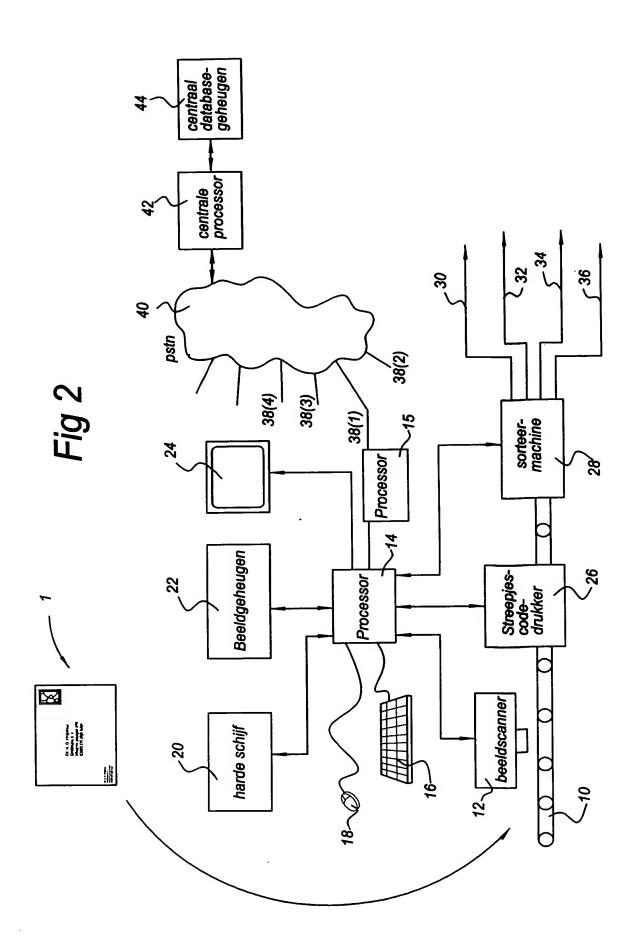
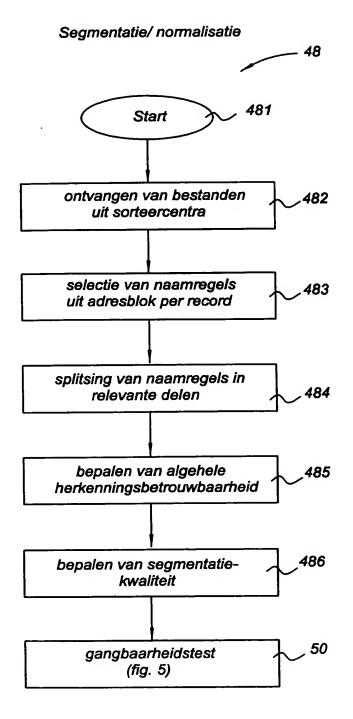
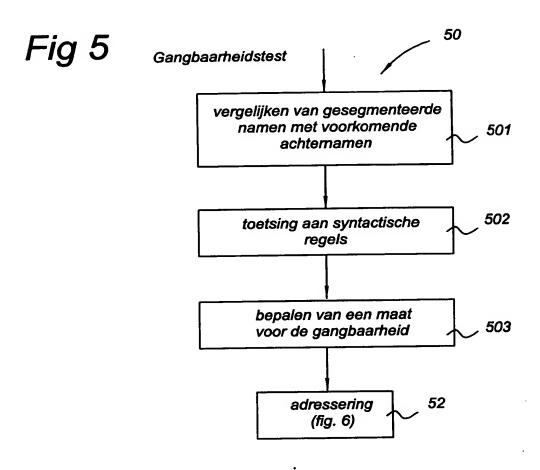
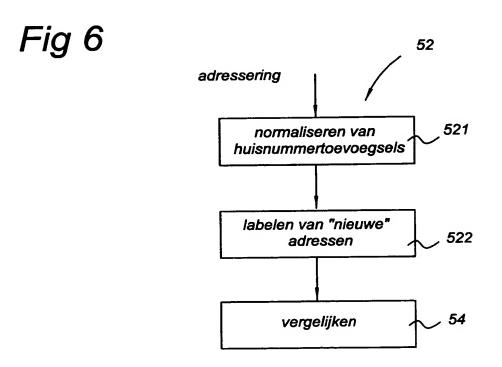


Fig 4







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Inrichting en werkwijze voor het actualiseren van een adressendatabase met geregistreerde adresrecords

De onderhavige uitvinding heeft betrekking op een inrichting voor het actualise-5 ren van een adressendatabase met geregistreerde adresrecords, omvattende:

- tenminste één processor voor het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- een met de tenminste ene processor verbonden geheugen voor het opslaan van de adresgegevens;
- een met de tenminste ene processor verbonden databasegeheugen met daarin opgeslagen de adressendatabase.

Een dergelijke inrichting is bekend uit JP-A-9/57204.

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JP-A-8/323299 heeft betrekking op een adresdatabasemanagementsysteem dat is ingericht voor het actualiseren van een adresdatabase op basis van teruggestuurde post waarop correcties zijn aangebracht. De teruggestuurde post wordt gelezen door een leeseenheid en gecorrigeerde gegevens worden in een geheugen opgeslagen. Het managementsysteem actualiseert automatisch de database op basis van de op de teruggestuurde post vermelde gegevens. Een postsorteermachine is gekoppeld aan het databasemanagementsysteem dat post in overeenstemming met het gecorrigeerde adres kan sorteren. Dit document heeft geen betrekking op het actualiseren van bestaande databases zonder gebruik te maken van teruggestuurde post waarop correcties zijn aangebracht.

JP-A-9/314067 beschrijft een postsorteerinrichting en -werkwijze. Een opstelling wordt getoond die middelen omvat voor het uitlezen van adresinformatie uit de post en het op basis daarvan genereren van een adrescode. Als alternatief kan de adresinformatie met de hand worden ingevoerd. De adrescode wordt vergeleken met de inhoud van een adresinformatiedatabase. Wanneer de adrescode niet letterlijk correspondeert met een adres in de database, worden de adrescode en mogelijk correcte adressen aan de bediening getoond. De bediening kan dan, bijvoorbeeld door de naam van de geadresseerde op de post en de namen van de geadresseerde in de mogelijk correcte adressen te vergelijken beslissen welke daarvan correct is. Dit correcte adres wordt dan op het poststuk geprint voor verdere geautomatiseerde sortering. Dit document gaat uit van een correcte adresdatabase.

JP-A-9/75862 beschrijft een postsorteermachine. Deze omvat een videocodeerterminal. De bediening van de machine voert een gebruikerscode in. De machine evalueert de juistheid van de gebruikerscode via vergelijking met een database. Dit document maakt geen melding van actualiseren van een adresdatabase.

JP-A-9/57204, waarvan de conclusies zijn afgebakend, betreft het probleem van het actualiseren van een adresdatabase, die wordt gebruikt in een automatische postsorteerinrichting.

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In een dergelijke postsorteerinrichting is een videocodeereenheid aanwezig, die poststukken uitleest en de adresgegevens bijvoorbeeld met een 'optical character recognition' eenheid omzet in een adrescode. De adrescode wordt opgeslagen in een geheugen. Tijdens het sorteerproces wordt de adrescode vergeleken met in een adresdatabase opgeslagen adresgegevens. Als uit de vergelijking blijkt, dat de adrescode correspondeert met een in de database opgeslagen adres, dan wordt dit voor de verdere sortering als correct aangenomen.

Sommige adrescodes corresponderen met geen enkel adres in de database. Het is dan mogelijk om het beeld dat door videocodeereenheid van het poststuk is geregistreerd op een scherm weer te geven. De bediening van de postsorteerinrichting bestudeerd dan de op het scherm ingevoerde informatie en voert met de hand, bijvoorbeeld via een toetsenbord, het adres in dat door het verdere sorteerproces moet worden gebruikt. Het genoemde JP-A-9/57204 stelt echter ook voor om de database zelf te actualiseren, zodat fouten en/of gevallen waarin adrescodes niet corresponderen met een adres in de database steeds minder vaak zullen voorkomen.

Daartoe stelt JP-A-9/57204 in essentie het volgende voor. De adrescodes van de poststukken die niet corresponderen met een adres in de database worden in een geheugen opgeslagen. De bijbehorende, geweigerde poststukken worden via een aparte lijn afgevoerd. Op een geschikt tijdstip worden de geweigerde poststukken opnieuw de machine ingevoerd om op basis van hernieuwd uitlezen de database te actualiseren. Principieel kan de weigering van de poststukken twee verschillende oorzaken hebben. Allereerst kan het 'optical character recognition' systeem een of meer karakters niet hebben herkend. Ten tweede kan het zijn, dat alle karakters wel zijn herkend, maar dat de aldus vastgestelde adrescode niet correspondeert met een adres in de database.

In het eerste geval wordt het beeld dat door de videocodeereenheid is geregistreerd aan de bediening van het systeem getoond. De bediening beslist op basis daar-

van hoe de foutieve karakters moeten worden gecorrigeerd. Via patroonherkenning van het aldus met de hand gecorrigeerde adres wordt de database eventueel gecorrigeerd of aangevuld. In het tweede geval wordt de database aangevuld met de nieuwe adresinformatie, waarvan wordt aangenomen, dat deze correct is.

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Het probleem dat door de onderhavige uitvinding wordt opgelost betreft het zo veel mogelijk automatisch actualiseren van een adressendatabase. Problemen die daarbij optreden zijn bijvoorbeeld als volgt. De adressendatabase zal altijd een bepaalde hoeveelheid adresgegevens bevatten, waarvan de betrouwbaarheid kan worden verbeterd, of waarin zich kleine fouten bevinden. Voorts bevinden veel mensen zich vaak tijdelijk op een adres dat niet hun woonadres is, bijvoorbeeld als zij op vakantie zijn of als zij enige tijd in een ziekenhuis zijn opgenomen. In die tijd wordt post voor hen naar een ander adres dan hun woonadres gestuurd. Desalniettemin is de adressering op de post voor hen correct en mag sortering niet worden geweigerd. Evenmin mag een adresdatabase dan worden aangepast. Bovendien verhuizen veel mensen zonder dat zij postbezorgingsbedrijven op tijd of op correcte wijze hun nieuwe woonadres meedelen. In dat geval is wijziging van de adresdatabase wel vereist. Ook worden veel mensen op verschillende adressen geadresseerd, bijvoorbeeld omdat zij een privé-adres en een zakelijk adres hebben. Tenslotte is van sommige mensen (bijvoorbeeld kinderen) in het geheel geen adres bij postbezorgingsinstanties bekend, terwijl dat voor controle van het sorteerproces wel handig zou zijn.

De doelstelling van de aanvrage is allereerst om bij het actualiseren van de adressendatabase dit soort problemen zoveel mogelijk te vermijden en zo betrouwbaar mogelijke gegevens te verkrijgen.

Daartoe heeft de inrichting van de bij de aanvang genoemde soort het kenmerk, dat de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om voor de adresgegevens een kwaliteitsmaat vast te stellen op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, de adresgegevens te vergelijken met de in het databasegeheugen opgeslagen adresrecords, en op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords de inhoud van het databasegeheugen te actualiseren.

In de inrichting van de uitvinding wordt een adressendatabase met geregistreerde adresrecords dus voortdurend geactualiseerd op basis van door de inrichting ontvangen, op poststukken afgedrukte adresgegevens. Daarbij kan het inlezen van deze op poststukken vermelde gegevens eventueel door mensen plaatsvinden, die vervolgens

deze gegevens met de hand invoeren. Bij voorkeur vindt het inlezen van deze adresgegevens echter automatisch plaats. Dit laatste kan met elke daartoe bekende technologie gebeuren. Het actualiseren van de adressendatabase gebeurt geheel automatisch en is niet, zoals in de stand van de techniek, gebaseerd op het handmatig verbeteren van de adressendatabase op basis van door de inrichting geweigerde poststukken, waarvan de gelezen adresgegevens niet corresponderen met opgeslagen adresrecords. Daartoe maakt de inrichting volgens de uitvinding gebruik van een kwaliteitsmaat die aangeeft hoe goed de adresgegevens zijn en die wordt vastgesteld op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria. De inrichting bepaalt geheel automatisch of de kwaliteit van die orde is, dat de adressendatabase kan worden geactualiseerd op basis van de adresgegevens.

Bij het actualiseren van de adressendatabase kan gebruik gemaakt worden van automatisch van alle poststukken ingelezen adresgegevens. Uiteraard is het echter ook mogelijk om een selectie daarbij toe te passen. Gedacht kan bijvoorbeeld worden aan aselecte steekproeven of het vermijden van het actualiseren van de adressendatabase gedurende een bepaalde periode, waarin veel post wordt aangeboden voor ongebruikelijke adressen, bijvoorbeeld de kerstperiode. Ook is het mogelijk om bijvoorbeeld handmatig geschreven adresgegevens niet te verwerken, of adresgegevens van ansichtkaarten buiten beschouwing te laten.

De onderhavige uitvinding heeft ook betrekking op een werkwijze voor het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen met geregistreerde adresrecords, omvattende:

- het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- het opslaan van de adresgegevens;

25 gekenmerkt door

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het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

Tevens heeft de onderhavige uitvinding betrekking op een gegevensdrager voorzien van een computerprogramma dat door een computerinrichting kan worden gelezen en na te zijn ingelezen de computerinrichting de functionaliteit van het actualiseren van

een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen met geregistreerde adresrecords verschaft onder gebruikmaking van de volgende stappen:

- het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- het opslaan van de adresgegevens;
- 5 gekenmerkt door

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het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

Voorts heeft de onderhavige uitvinding betrekking op een computerprogramma dat door een computerinrichting kan worden gelezen en na te zijn ingelezen de computerinrichting de functionaliteit van het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen met geregistreerde adresrecords verschaft onder gebruikmaking van de volgende stappen:

- het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- het opslaan van de adresgegevens;

gekenmerkt door

het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

De uitvinding zal hierna worden toegelicht onder verwijzing naar enkele figuren, die slechts zijn bedoeld ter illustratie van de uitvinding en niet ter beperking van de reikwijdte daarvan.

Figuur 1 is een voorbeeld van een poststuk dat is voorzien van adresgegevens van een geadresseerde en adresgegevens van een afzender;

figuur 2 is een voorbeeld van een inrichting die kan worden gebruikt bij het actualiseren van een database met adresrecords;

figuur 3 is een stroomschema van enkele stappen tijdens het proces van actualiseren van adresrecords in een database;

figuren 4, 5 en 6 geven nadere details van enkele van de in figuur 3 getoonde stappen weer.

In figuur 1 is een voorbeeld van een brief getoond, die is voorzien van adresgegevens van een geadresseerde 2 en adresgegevens van een afzender 7. De brief 1 kan zijn voorzien van een postzegel 8. In plaats van een postzegel 8 kan ook een frankeerstempel of dergelijke zijn aangebracht. De adresgegevens kunnen als verder alternatief aanvullend of uitsluitend in de vorm van een code op het poststuk zijn aangebracht. Een dergelijke code kan een één-dimensionale of twee-dimensionale streepjescode zijn. In een dergelijke code kan ook de waarde van de frankering zijn opgenomen. In dat geval kan de code als "elektronische postzegel" worden betiteld.

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De adresgegevens van de geadresseerde 2 omvatten bijvoorbeeld een naamregel 3, een firmanaam 4, een straatnaam 5 en een plaatsnaam met postcode 6. De adresgegevens van de afzender kunnen op soortgelijke wijze zijn opgebouwd.

Een dergelijke brief 1 kan met een automatische sorteermachine worden gesorteerd. Een voorbeeld daarvan is getoond in figuur 2. De brief 1 wordt bijvoorbeeld op een lopende band 10 gelegd. De lopende band 10 leidt de brief 1 langs een beeldscanner 12, die een beeld van die zijde van het poststuk maakt waarop de gegevens van de geadresseerde 2, en eventueel van de afzender 7 staan. De beeldscanner 12 stuurt het opgenomen beeld naar de processor 14.

Na te zijn ingelezen door de beeldscanner 12 voert de lopende band 10 de brief 1 naar een streepjescodedrukker 26, die een streepjescode op de brief 1 kan afdrukken. Deze streepjescode omvat nadere gegevens die bij de uiteindelijke sortering worden gebruikt. Na door de streepjescodedrukker 26 te zijn geleid, voert de lopende band 10 de brief 1 naar een sorteermachine 28, die de afgedrukte streepjescode inleest en op basis daarvan de brief 1 een bepaalde route 30, 32, 34, 36, ... inleidt.

De beeldscanner 12, de streepjescodedrukker 26 en de sorteermachine 28 zijn verbonden met een processor 14. De processor 14 is tevens verbonden met middelen waarmee de bediening gegevens kan invoeren, zoals een muis 18 en een toetsenbord 16. Ook is de processor 14 verbonden met geschikte geheugens, waaronder bijvoorbeeld een harde schijf 20 en een beeldgeheugen 22, waarin de processor 14 het door de beeldscanner 12 gelezen beeld met adresgegevens, zowel met betrekking tot de geadresseerde als de afzender (indien van toepassing) opslaat.

De processor 14 is tevens verbonden met weergeefmiddelen 24, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van een monitor.

De processor 14 bestuurt de beeldscanner 12, de streepjescodedrukker 26 en de sorteermachine 28 ten behoeve van het sorteerproces op automatische wijze. De wijze waarop dit gebeurt is op zichzelf bekend en behoeft hier geen nadere toelichting.

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De processor 14 is in de opstelling volgens figuur 2 verbonden met een telefoonnetwerk, bijvoorbeeld PSTN 40, (Public Switched Telephone Network).

Als aanvulling kan tussen processor 14 en het PSTN 40 een extra processor 15 zijn aangebracht, die processor 14 kan ontlasten door bijvoorbeeld de werkzaamheden met betrekking tot het versturen en ontvangen van de gegevens via het PSTN uit te voeren. Daartoe kan het bufferen van gegevens behoren, het uitvoeren van communicatie met andere processoren via het PSTN 40, en met name het uitvoeren van een of meer bewerkingen die in het kader van de onderhavige uitvinding nodig zijn en die niet per sé reeds voor het sorteerproces zelf nodig zijn. Voor het sorteerproces zal het bijvoorbeeld niet nodig zijn om de naam van de geadresseerde (bedrijfsnaam en/of privé persoon) of de gegevens van de afzender 7 uit het door de beeldscanner verschafte beeld af te leiden.

Een centrale processor 42 is eveneens verbonden met PSTN 40. Tevens is de centrale processor 42 verbonden met een centraal databasegeheugen 44.

In figuur 2 is aangegeven dat de processor 14 (eventueel via processor 15) met PSTN 40 is verbonden via een kabel 38(1) en dat er meerdere van dergelijke verbindingen 38(2), 38(3), 38(4), ... zijn. Deze overige verbindingen zijn bedoeld om aan te geven, dat er meerdere van dergelijke opstellingen met lokale processoren en lokale sorteermiddelen op het PSTN 40 kunnen zijn aangesloten. Zij kunnen alle via het PSTN 40 met de centrale processor 42 communiceren.

Het is echter ook denkbaar dat de uitvinding wordt toegepast op een lokale opstelling en dat de processor 14, eventueel tezamen met processor 15, direct verbonden is met het centrale databasegeheugen 44.

Het centrale databasegeheugen 44 omvat een database met adresrecords. In het kader van deze uitvinding bevat een adresrecord tenminste een naamregel 3, een straatnaam 5 en een plaatsnaam met postcode 6. Op de naamregel kan de naam van een natuurlijke persoon staan, maar ook die van een bedrijfsnaam, of allebei. Soms zijn er twee (of meer) naamregels, waarop bijvoorbeeld zowel de naam van een natuurlijke

persoon als een bedrijfsnaam staan vermeld. Uiteraard is het ook mogelijk om verdere relevante gegevens in het adresrecord op te nemen.

Figuur 3 geeft in grote lijnen de stappen weer die worden gezet tijdens het actualiseren van adresrecords in het centrale databasegeheugen 44. Ruwweg worden daarbij de volgende stappen gezet.

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De poststuk-gegevens worden aan een menselijk en of machinaal herkenningsproces aangeboden met als doel data over de bij de postale dienst betrokkenen te verkrijgen.

Het beeld dat in beeldgeheugen 22 is opgeslagen wordt door processor 14, eventueel in combinatie met processor 15, geanalyseerd om de plaats van een of meer adresblokken vast te stellen, van de geadresseerde en eventueel van de afzender. Ieder adresblok wordt aan analyses onderworpen waarbij de aard van de regels in het adresblok wordt beoordeeld. Iedere adresblokregel wordt gesegmenteerd, d.w.z. dat wordt beoordeeld uit welke logisch samenhangende delen, bijv. 'initialen' of 'straatnaam', de regel bestaat. Eventueel wordt de inhoud van aangetroffen elementen genormaliseerd, waarbij verschillende verschijningsvormen op een standaardvorm worden afgebeeld.

Iedere beoordeling die in het herkenningsproces wordt gemaakt resulteert in een beoordelingsscore, waarin de mate van (on)zekerheid omtrent het herkenningsresultaat wordt weergegeven. Een slecht herkenningsresultaat mag aanleiding zijn de waarneming als onbruikbaar te verwerpen. In het herkenningsproces kan gebruik worden gemaakt van beschikbare geverifieerde referentiedata, waarbij gedacht kan worden aan bestanden met in een bepaald land, bijvoorbeeld Nederland, voorkomende achternamen, postcodes, straatnamen, woonplaatsnamen en afgiftepunten. Dergelijke referentiedata zijn in een geheugen opgeslagen en kunnen worden gebruikt voor een scherpere beoordeling van de herkenning en mogelijk zelfs voor correctie van eerdere herkenningsresultaten. Zo kan een herkende maar niet bestaande postcode mogelijk na matching met het (geverifieerde) bestand van wel bestaande postcodes worden verbeterd.

Nu zal figuur 3 in meer detail worden toegelicht.

Op dit moment worden in Nederland door middel van een Automatisch PostSorteerSysteem (APSS) op zes verschillende sorteercentra dagelijks ongeveer 24.000.000 poststukken automatisch verwerkt. Eén zo'n sorteercentrum komt qua functionaliteit

overeen met het middengedeelte van figuur 2. De beeldscanner 12 maakt een digitaal beeld van de adreszijde van elk poststuk 1, dat naar de processor 14 wordt gestuurd die het beeld opslaat in beeldgeheugen 22. Het adres in het digitale beeld wordt door de processor 14 gelokaliseerd en vervolgens wordt het adres automatisch gelezen. In een eerste stap van het stroomdiagram in figuur 3, "APSS-collectie" 46, worden de adresgegevens van de poststukken tijdelijk lokaal opgeslagen in een beeldgeheugen 22. De in de adresgegevens van het beeld aanwezige karakters worden met behulp van optical character recognition (OCR) technieken, die op zich zelf bekend zijn, vastgesteld. Voor omzetting van de op de poststukken aanwezige karakters naar digitale karakters kan een karakter-herkenbetrouwbaarheid worden vastgesteld, die afhangt van de nauwkeurigheid van het karakter op het poststuk, het inleesproces door de beeldscanner 12 en de kwaliteit van het OCR-proces. Handgeschreven karakters zullen een grotere kans op een foutieve uitkomst geven dan gedrukte karakters.

Bij voorkeur worden voor het actualiseren van de adresgegevens in de centrale database 44 alleen die adresgegevens gebruikt die in machineschrift op het poststuk 1 zijn aangebracht en waarvan de postcode/huisnummer-combinatie 6 correct is gelezen. Voor het postsorteerproces zelf worden uiteraard zoveel mogelijk alle uit het OCR-proces komende gegevens meegenomen, ook die van handgeschreven adressen. De adresgegevens van post met handgeschreven adressen worden bij voorkeur als onvoldoende betrouwbaar beschouwd om de adresdatabase in het centrale databasegeheugen 44 te actualiseren.

Als aanvulling op adresgegevens die m.b.v. OCR-technieken uit opgenomen beelden zijn afgeleid, kan gebruik worden gemaakt van door mensen met de hand ingevoerde gegevens. Dit betreft bijvoorbeeld gegevens van poststukken waarvan de processor 14 heeft vastgesteld dat het onmogelijk is om bestaande adresgegevens wat betreft adres, postcode en woonplaats op automatische wijze uit de karakters in het beeld af te leiden. Dergelijke poststukken worden tijdens het sorteerproces geweigerd en voor handmatige verwerking apart gelegd. Een werknemer verwerkt deze poststukken met de hand in zoverre, dat hij het adres van het beeld via de monitor 24 leest en met de hand via de invoermiddelen 16, 18 het door hem vastgestelde adres invoert, waarna de processor 14 alsnog in staat is de streepjescodedrukker 26 en de sorteermachine de juiste instructies te sturen. Het is verder denkbaar dat deze werknemer de adresgegevens van het originele poststuk 1 zelf afleest.

Ook is het denkbaar dat adresgegevens voor het actualiseren van de centrale database 44 afkomstig van verstuurde poststukken elders met de hand zijn ingevoerd, resulterend in een databestand met adresgegevens dat bij voorbeeld via floppy of Internet wordt verstuurd en na te zijn ingelezen aan de centrale processor 42 wordt aangeboden.

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De centrale processor 42 kan via de netwerkverbinding PSTN 40 (of via elke andere geschikt communicatieverbinding) communiceren met processor 14 (of 15) om de in het beeldgeheugen 22 opgeslagen beelden op te vragen. Na ontvangst kan de centrale processor 42 eventueel noodzakelijke administratieve gegevens aan de ingelezen adresgegevens toevoegen. Administratieve gegevens bestaan bijvoorbeeld uit het sorteercentrum waar de adresgegevens zijn ingelezen, de datum van uitlezing van de adresgegevens en een volgnummer. Daarna kan de centrale processor 42 de ontvangen, ingelezen adresgegevens centraal opslaan in elk geschikt geheugen. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld een geheugen zijn dat apart is van het centrale databasegeheugen 44.

Na de "APSS-collectie"-stap 46 wordt een segmentatie/normalisatie-stap 48 uitgevoerd. Zoals getoond in figuur 4 worden in deze stap de opgehaalde, ingelezen
adresgegevens (stap 482) per poststuk in relevante onderdelen gesplitst. Uit de
adresgegevens 2 van de geadresseerde worden naamregels 3 geselecteerd, stap 483, en
opgesplitst in delen, stap 484. Aan de afzonderlijke delen worden betekenissen
toegekend, zoals voorvoegsel, voornaam, titel, etc. Vervolgens kunnen de afzonderlijke
delen worden genormaliseerd, waarbij verschillende verschijningsvormen op een
standaardvorm worden afgebeeld. Indien aanwezig wordt ook de firmanaam 4 geanalyseerd. Er resulteert dan een adresrecord met achternamen en/of bedrijfsnamen en
bijbehorende attributen, zoals voorletters, tussenvoegsels, achtervoegsels, etc.

Volgens een vooraf bepaald algoritme wordt uit de gegevens in het adresrecord een algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid bepaald, stap 485. In deze algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid is de karakter-herkenbetrouwheid als onderdeel opgenomen. Ook is de algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid gebaseerd op eventuele schrijf- en/of typefouten in de adresgegevens op het poststuk zelf.

Ook wordt een maat voor de kwaliteit van de segmentatie (het in afzonderlijke delen splitsen) binnen het segmentatieproces bepaald, stap 486. Zowel de algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid als de segmentatiekwaliteit worden opgenomen in het adresrecord. Beide maten, dat wil zeggen algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid en

segmentatiekwaliteit, worden later gebruikt bij het daadwerkelijk actualiseren van de adresrecords in het centrale databasegeheugen 44.

Vervolgens wordt een gangbaarheidstest 50 door de centrale processor 42 uitgevoerd (zie figuur 5) Daartoe beschikt de centrale processor 42 over een bestand van in Nederland voorkomende achternamen. Dit bestand is in een (niet weergegeven) met de centrale processor 42 verbonden geheugen opgeslagen. Elke achternaam die uit de adresgegevens is gesplitst met behulp van stap 48 wordt in stap 501 vergeleken met voorkomende achternamen en in stap 502 aan syntactische regels getoetst. Hetzelfde gebeurt met voornamen en eventueel aanwezige bedrijfsnamen. Met behulp van een vooraf bepaald algoritme wordt een gangbaarheidsmaat van elke achternaam, voornaam en eventuele bedrijfsnaam bepaald en aan het adresrecord toegevoegd, stap 503.

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Na het uitlezen met behulp van beeldscanner 12 zijn de straatnaamgegevens 5 (of postbusnummers) en de combinatie van postcode en plaatsnaam 6 reeds door de processor 14 getest op de bestaanbaarheid, omdat deze gegevens voor het postsorteerproces nodig zijn. In de huidige praktijk worden huisnummertoevoegsels, zoals "boven", "achter", "2-hoog", "II", enz. niet gecontroleerd. In stap 52 "adressering" worden deze huisnummertoevoegsels genormaliseerd aan de hand van een lijst met veel voorkomende afkortingen. "TO" is bijvoorbeeld synoniem met "tegenover". "1-hoog" is bijvoorbeeld synoniem met "1^e" en met "i".

In stap 52 controleert de centrale processor 42 of er voor elke combinatie van straatnaam, huisnummer, postcode en plaats corresponderende gegevens in de, in het centrale databasegeheugen 44 opgeslagen database aanwezig zijn. Is dit niet het geval, dan is het uitgelezen adres "nieuw". Dit gegeven wordt aan het ingelezen adresrecord toegevoegd (stap 522).

De centrale processor 42 leest vervolgens alle op het adres (inclusief toevoegsels) van een ingelezen adresrecord ingeschreven namen uit de centrale database in het centrale databasegeheugen 44. De ingelezen namen 3, 4 worden vergeleken met de ingeschreven namen uit de centrale database. Indien mogelijk worden eventuele voorletters, voornamen, voorvoegsels, achternamen en achtervoegsels met elkaar vergeleken. Elke ingelezen naam, 3, 4 van een geadresseerde krijgt een vergelijkingsscore, waarin de kwaliteit en de resultaten van vergelijkingen met de verschillende componenten van de

ingeschreven naam, te weten voorletters, voorvoegsels, voornaam, achternaam, achtervoegsels, enz., zijn opgenomen.

Op basis van de vergelijkingsscores, de segmentatiekwaliteit, de gangbaarheidsmaat en de algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid van de ingelezen adresgegevens besluit de centrale processor 42 of een ingelezen adresrecord nieuw, bekend of onbekend is. Daarbij wordt gebruik gemaakt van een kwaliteitsmaat, die bij voorkeur is gebaseerd op tenminste één van de volgende criteria: segmentatiekwaliteit, de gangbaarheidsmaat en de algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid. De kwaliteitsmaat kan bijvoorbeeld het rekenkundig gemiddelde van deze drie criteria samen zijn. Het toekennen van de status "nieuw", "bekend" of "onbekend" kan bijvoorbeeld in overeenstemming met de volgende regels gebeuren:

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- de ingelezen adresgegevens zijn nieuw als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben en de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is;
- de ingelezen adresgegevens zijn bekend als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief grote waarde hebben en de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is;
- de ingelezen adresgegevens zijn onbekend als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben en de kwaliteitsmaat relatief gering is.

Het toekennen van deze status gebeurt in stap 56 "besluiten".

In dezelfde stap wordt de statistiek van bekende adresrecords bijgewerkt. Hierop wordt hieronder nog nader ingegaan.

Voor een nieuw en/of onbekend adresrecord kan de centrale processor 42 een nieuw adresrecord in het centrale databasegeheugen 44 genereren.

Voor het bijwerken van statistische gegevens met betrekking tot reeds bekende adresrecords kunnen bijvoorbeeld de volgende stappen worden gezet.

De frequentie van voorkomen van een gegeven kan per sorteercentrum worden bijgehouden, zodat de spreiding van een adresgegeven kan worden vastgelegd. Ook kan worden bijgehouden op welke datum een adresrecord voor het laatst in een van de sorteercentra werd ingelezen. Aldus kan in de centrale database worden bijgehouden op welke data van bijvoorbeeld het laatste jaar een betreffend adresrecord ergens op een poststuk is voorgekomen. Dan kan het interval tussen twee opeenvolgende keren dat het adresrecord op een poststuk werd gebruikt, worden bepaald. Voor het bepalen van dat interval kan bijvoorbeeld worden gekeken naar een recente periode of naar een langer geleden periode. Ook kan het gemiddelde worden bepaald tussen twee opeenvol-

gende keren dat het adresrecord in een van de sorteercentra werd uitgelezen. Indien het gemiddelde in de loop van de tijd sterk wijzigt, kan dit een aanwijzing zijn dat het adresrecord moet worden gewijzigd.

Het is ook mogelijk dat de adresgegevens 7 van de afzender worden geregistreerd en in een geheugen worden opgeslagen. Vervolgens kunnen de afzendergegevens 7 dan worden gebruikt bij het bepalen van de waarde van de kwaliteitsmaat. Er kan immers van worden uitgegaan, dat poststukken die afkomstig zijn van bijvoorbeeld de burgerlijke stand van een gemeente zeer betrouwbare adresgegevens van de geadresseerde 2 bevatten. Bij voorkeur worden bestemmingsadressen die uit de database 44 zelf afkomstige zijn niet gebruikt om de maat van betrouwbaarheid van adressen in de database 44 te bepalen.

Als de adresgegevens van de afzenders worden opgeslagen is het ook mogelijk om bij te houden of een adresgegeven vaak vanuit hetzelfde adres wordt verstuurd. als een bestemmingsadres vaak uit slechts één afzenderadres wordt gebruikt, hoeft de betrouwbaarheid niet groot te zijn. Hoe meer afzenderadressen hetzelfde bestemmingsadres gebruiken hoe groter de betrouwbaarheid zal zijn.

Op basis van de gegevens kan elk adresrecord een status worden toegekend, bijvoorbeeld nieuw, gangbaar, betrouwbaar, of oud. Daartoe kunnen bijvoorbeeld de volgende regels gelden. Wanneer een adresrecord voor het eerst wordt aangemaakt, krijgt het de status nieuw. Een adresrecord wordt gangbaar wanneer het meerdere keren van verschillende afzenders en/of van verschillende sorteercentra wordt ontvangen. Een gangbaar adresrecord kan betrouwbaar worden, wanneer het adresrecord regelmatig op poststukken wordt aangetroffen. De regelmaat wordt bepaald aan de hand van het gemiddelde interval tussen twee opeenvolgende keren dat het adresrecord op een poststuk wordt ingelezen. Indien de gemiddelde duur van dat interval langer wordt dan een vooraf bepaalde tijdsduur kan worden bepaald, dat een betrouwbaar adresrecord weer gangbaar wordt. Indien een adresrecord vervalt, krijgt het de status oud.

Indien het interval tussen recente keren dat een adresrecord op een poststuk wordt aangetroffen steeds langer wordt, is dit een indicatie van bijvoorbeeld verhuizing en kan worden besloten dat het adresrecord moet vervallen.

Voorbeeld.

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Nu zal een voorbeeld van een herkenningsproces worden toegelicht. Er wordt vanuit gegaan dat alleen gegevens waarbij een geldige postcode is gelezen worden aangeboden. Het gelezen adresblok is bijvoorbeeld:

5 BTT Port Redapersice

Pohtnus 5838

5858GJ Riksdijk

NL

terwijl er op het ingelezen poststuk 1 staat:

PTT Post Mediaservice

10 Postbus 5858

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5858GJ Rijswijk

NL

Elk karakter is met een bepaalde herkenbetrouwbaarheid gelezen, voor elke regel kan daarmee een gemiddelde herkenbetrouwbaarheid worden bepaald. Voor de eerste regel is dat bijvoorbeeld 60%, voor de tweede regel 75% en voor de laatste regel bijvoorbeeld 65%. De algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid zou dan het gemiddelde van 60%, 75% en 65% = 66,6% kunnen zijn. Als alternatief zou ook de eerste regel doorslaggevend kunnen worden genoemd bij het bepalen van de herkenbetrouwbaarheid.

Segmentatie leidt in dit geval tot drie regels, in de eerste regel worden drie woorden onderscheiden, in de tweede regel twee woorden, in de derde regel ook twee woorden, en verder nog een los attribuut. Uitgaande van een postcode en woonplaats in de derde regel van het adres krijgt de derde regel een lage segmentatiescore, ook al wegens de grote ruimte tussen twee elementen (Riksdijk en NL), bijvoorbeeld 40%. De tweede regel zal straat en huisnummer (en eventueel een toevoegsel) moeten bevatten en krijgt een hoge segmentatiescore aangezien de structuur overeenkomt met de verwachting, bijvoorbeeld 90%. De eerste regel bevat drie elementen van drie, vier en elf karakters en heeft aldus een goede structuur voor een achternaam of een bedrijfsnaam. De segmentatiescore is bijvoorbeeld 80%. Een gemiddelde segmentatiescore wordt 70%.

In de naamregel worden geen bekende voor-, tussen- of achtervoegsels aangetroffen, ook geen titels of iets wat daarop lijkt. Dit wijst erop dat het hier een bedrijfsnaam betreft. In de tweede regel wordt gecontroleerd of er een toevoegsel aan

het huisnummer voorkomt en zo ja wat dit dan is. In dit voorbeeld is geen toevoegsel aanwezig en zal worden herkend dat het een Postbus betreft. Er valt dus weinig te normaliseren.

Een gangbaarheidtest zou kunnen bestaan uit een match met bestaande persoonsof bedrijfsnamen. Het matchen zal een bepaalde score opleveren. Score is 100% bij
volledige overeenkomst, score is 0% bij volledig verschil. Vergelijking met de naam
"PTT Post Mediaservice" zou bijvoorbeeld een score van 65% kunnen opleveren,
terwijl die bij "PTT Post Brieven" op 25% uitkomt en bij Sijthof Pers op 0%.

De vergelijkingsscore kan via een matching-algoritme berekend worden, maar dan bij vergelijking met op het gelezen adres (Postbus 5858) ingeschreven namen van personen en/of bedrijven. Dat zouden voorbeeld de volgende bedrijven kunnen zijn: PTT Post Mediaservice, DMdata en Dataprofs. De matching met PTT Post Mediaservice is 65%, die met DMdata en Dataprofs nihil. De vergelijkingsscore met PTT Post Mediaservice is klaarblijkelijk de hoogste.

Een regelgebaseerd systeem zal nu bepalen of in het onderhavig geval (66,6% betrouwbaarheid, 70% segmentatie, 65% gangbaarheid, 65% vergelijkingsscore) het gegeven als bekend, onbekend of nieuw moet worden gekwalificeerd. Voor een nieuw gegeven kan bijvoorbeeld geëist worden dat een kwaliteitsmaat (bijvoorbeeld het gemiddelde van algehele herkenbetrouwbaarheid, segmentatie en gangbaarheid) groter dan 80% is en dat de vergelijkingsscore kleiner dan 80% is. Voor een bekend gegeven kan men bijvoorbeeld eisen dat de kwaliteitsmaat en de vergelijkingsscore groter dan 95% zijn. Alles dat daar buiten valt kan als onbekend worden gekwalificeerd.

Verdere uitvoeringsvormen.

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In figuur 2 is de situatie getekend, dat het centrale databasegeheugen één database heeft. Het is echter ook mogelijk om op basis van de daarin aanwezige database een extra database te maken, dat een selectie van de adresrecords uit de gehele centrale database omvat. Deze selectie vindt plaats op basis van bepaalde beslisregels. In deze selectie van adresrecords zijn bijvoorbeeld alleen die adresrecords opgenomen, waarvan de betrouwbaarheid een bepaalde drempelwaarde overschrijdt. Deze betrouwbare adresrecords kunnen dan bijvoorbeeld beschikbaar worden gesteld voor gebruik door derden.

In het geval dat is voorzien in een extra database met een selectie van de gegevens uit het centrale databasegeheugen, kan er in zijn voorzien dat als extra beslisregel voor het opnemen in het extra databasegeheugen geldt, dat selectie in overeenstemming moet zijn met de betreffende regels van privacy wetgeving. Om gegevens in overeenstemming met privacy wetgeving te bewaren, kan dan de centrale database zelf in een black-box worden opgenomen. De daarin opgeslagen gegevens kunnen dan alleen via beveiligde, bijvoorbeeld eveneens in de black-box opgenomen output routines, worden benaderd. Daarbij kan bijvoorbeeld het gebruik van een, eventueel publieke, elektronische sleutel zijn voorzien.

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Bij de besluitvorming over de bruikbaarheid van een ingelezen adresgegeven wordt dus bij voorkeur gebruik gemaakt van (1) de frequentie van voorkomen daarvan, (2) de variatie daarin en (3) de spreiding met betrekking tot afzenders. Daarvoor kan in principe een regel-gebaseerd systeem worden opgezet. Als alternatief kan de centrale processor 42 worden voorzien van een neuraal netwerk of dergelijke. In het algemeen zal gelden dat een adresgegeven beter bruikbaar is naarmate het meer recent op een poststuk is uitgelezen, als het voldoende vaak voorkomt (gangbaar is), naarmate het van meer verschillende afzenders wordt ontvangen (valide) en als de kwaliteit daarvan, bijvoorbeeld aangeduid door de segmentatiekwaliteit en de herkenbetrouwbaarheid groter is.

Hierboven is een uitvoeringsvorm beschreven waarin de stappen voor het actualiseren van de centrale database worden uitgevoerd door de centrale processor 42. Zoals eerder opgemerkt, kunnen deze stappen echter ook worden uitgevoerd door de processor 14 (of, al dan niet, gedeeltelijk door processor 15), namelijk dan wanneer het gaat om het actualiseren van een adresdatabase die alleen lokaal voorkomt en die is opgeslagen in een geheugen dat met de processor 14 (of 15) is verbonden.

Extra mogelijkheden voor de beschreven inrichting en werkwijze zijn als volgt.

Bij het uitlezen met de beeldscanner 12 kunnen de adresgegeven van de afzender 7 worden ingelezen. De processor 14 kan bijvoorbeeld vaststellen dat de adresgegevens van de afzender 7 overeenkomen met die van de PTT POST (of het sorteerbedrijf) zelf. De daarvan afkomstige gegevens zullen corresponderen met de gegevens in het centrale databasegeheugen 44. Dergelijke gegevens worden bij voorkeur niet in het beeldgeheugen 22 opgenomen om te voorkomen dat eventuele fouten in het centrale databasegeheugen 44 zichzelf iedere keer bevestigen.

Behalve titels en dergelijke van namen in naamregels 3 komt het voor, dat functies van mensen op poststukken staan vermeld. Ook deze gegevens kunnen in het centrale databasegeheugen 44 worden opgeslagen. Deze functies kunnen van belang zijn bij het opbouwen van de genoemde extra database.

Uiteraard kan de centrale database 44 ook worden gebruikt tijdens het sorteerproces, dat hierboven is toegelicht.

Conclusies

- Inrichting voor het actualiseren van een adressendatabase met geregistreerde
 adresrecords, omvattende:
 - tenminste één processor (14, 15, 42) voor het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
 - een met de tenminste ene processor (14, 15, 42) verbonden geheugen (22) voor het opslaan van de adresgegevens;
- een met de tenminste ene processor (14, 15, 42) verbonden databasegeheugen (44) met daarin opgeslagen de adressendatabase;

met het kenmerk, dat

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de tenminste ene processor (14, 15, 42) is ingericht om voor de adresgegevens een kwaliteitsmaat vast te stellen op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, de adresgegevens te vergelijken met de in het databasegeheugen (44) opgeslagen adresrecords, en op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords de inhoud van het databasegeheugen (44) te actualiseren.

- Inrichting volgens conclusie 1, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht
 om een betrouwbaarheidsmaat van herkenning van de adresgegevens te bepalen en de kwaliteitsmaat mede te baseren op de betrouwbaarheidsmaat van herkenning.
 - 3. Inrichting volgens conclusie 1 of 2, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om uit de adresgegevens naamregels te selecteren, de naamregels volgens vooraf bepaalde regels in afzonderlijke delen te splitsen en de kwaliteitsmaat mede te baseren op het selecteren van naamregels en het splitsen daarvan.
 - 4. Inrichting volgens conclusie 3, verder omvattende opgeslagen gangbare namen, en waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om de afzonderlijke delen van de naamregels te vergelijken met de gangbare namen, op basis daarvan een gangbaarheidsmaat vast te stellen en de kwaliteitsmaat mede te baseren op de gangbaarheidsmaat.

5. Inrichting volgens conclusie 3 of 4, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om uit de naamregels een naam van een geadresseerde af te leiden, uit de adresgegevens een adres van de geadresseerde af te leiden, ingeschreven namen van bij dat adres horende personen uit de adressendatabase uit te lezen en te vergelijken met de naam van de geadresseerde en op basis van die vergelijking een vergelijkingsscore per ingeschreven naam te bepalen, waarbij een vergelijkingsscore een grotere waarde heeft naarmate er meer overeenstemming is tussen de naam van de geadresseerde en een respectieve ingeschreven naam.

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- 6. Inrichting volgens conclusie 5, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om te bepalen, dat de adresgegevens nieuw zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is.
- 7. Inrichting volgens conclusie 5 of 6, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om te bepalen, dat de adresgegevens bekend zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief grote waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is.
 - 8. Inrichting volgens conclusie 5, 6 of 7, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om te bepalen, dat de adresgegevens onbekend zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief gering is.
 - 9. Inrichting volgens een van de conclusies 6 t/m 8, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om als de adresgegevens nieuw zijn een extra, de adresgegevens bevattend adressecord in de adressendatabase te genereren.
 - 10. Inrichting volgens conclusie 9, waarbij de tenminste ene processor is ingericht om per adresrecord één van de volgende vier statussen te registreren:
 - status nieuw, wanneer het adresrecord wordt gegenereerd;
- status gangbaar, wanneer de bijbehorende adresgegevens van verschillende
 afzenders worden ontvangen;
 - status betrouwbaar, als de bijbehorende adresgegevens regelmatig opnieuw worden ingelezen;
 - status oud, als het adresrecord vervalt.

- 11. Inrichting volgens een van de voorgaande conclusies, waarbij de adressendatabase beveiligd is opgeslagen, zodanig dat ofwel de in de centrale database opgeslagen gegevens alleen via vooraf bepaalde regels bewerkt kunnen worden benaderd ofwel een deel van de in de centrale database opgeslagen gegevens via een vooraf bepaalde uitvoerroutine kan worden uitgevoerd.
- 12. Inrichting volgens een van de voorgaande conclusies, verder omvattende postsorteereenheden (26, 28) voor het automatisch sorteren van de poststukken (1) onder gebruikmaking van de adressendatabase.
 - 13. Werkwijze voor het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen (44) met geregistreerde adresrecords, omvattende:
 - het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
 - het opslaan van de adresgegevens;

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het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen (44) opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen (44) op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

- 14. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 13, omvattende de stap van het bepalen van een betrouwbaarheidsmaat van herkenning van de adresgegevens en het mede baseren van de kwaliteitsmaat op de betrouwbaarheidsmaat van herkenning.
 - 15. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 13 of 14, omvattende de stappen van het selecteren van naamregels uit de adresgegevens, het splitsen van de naamregels volgens vooraf bepaalde regels in afzonderlijke delen en het mede baseren van de kwaliteitsmaat op het selecteren van naamregels en het splitsen daarvan.
 - 16. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 15, omvattende de stappen van het vergelijken van de afzonderlijke delen van de naamregels met gangbare namen, het vaststellen van een

gangbaarheidsmaat op basis daarvan en het mede baseren van de kwaliteitsmaat op de gangbaarheidsmaat.

17. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 15 of 16, omvattende de stappen van het afleiden uit de naamregels van een naam van een geadresseerde, het afleiden uit de adresgegevens van een adres van de geadresseerde, het uitlezen van ingeschreven namen van bij dat adres horende personen uit de adressendatabase en het vergelijken daarvan met de naam van de geadresseerde en het bepalen van een vergelijkingsscore per ingeschreven naam op basis van die vergelijking, waarbij een vergelijkingsscore een grotere waarde heeft naarmate er meer overeenstemming is tussen de naam van de geadresseerde en een respectieve ingeschreven naam.

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- 18. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 17, omvattende de stap van het bepalen, dat de adresgegevens nieuw zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is.
 - 19. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 17 of 18, omvattende de stap van het bepalen, dat de adresgegevens bekend zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief grote waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief groot is.
 - 20. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 17, 18 of 19, omvattende de stap van het bepalen, dat de adresgegevens onbekend zijn, als de vergelijkingsscores een relatief geringe waarde hebben én de kwaliteitsmaat relatief gering is.
- 25 21. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 18, 19 of 20, omvattende de stap van het genereren van een extra, de adresgegevens bevattend adresrecord in de adressendatabase als de adresgegevens nieuw zijn.
- 22. Werkwijze volgens conclusie 21, omvattende de stap van het per adresrecord registreren van één van de volgende vier statussen:
 - status nieuw, wanneer het adresrecord wordt gegenereerd;
 - status gangbaar, wanneer de bijbehorende adresgegevens van verschillende afzenders worden ontvangen;

- status betrouwbaar, als de bijbehorende adresgegevens regelmatig opnieuw worden ingelezen;
- status oud, als het adresrecord vervalt.
- 5 23. Werkwijze volgens een van de conclusies 13-22, waarbij de adressendatabase beveiligd is opgeslagen, zodanig dat ofwel de in de centrale database opgeslagen gegevens alleen via vooraf bepaalde regels bewerkt kunnen worden benaderd ofwel een deel van de in de centrale database opgeslagen gegevens via een vooraf bepaalde uitvoerroutine kan worden uitgevoerd.

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- 24. Werkwijze volgens een van de conclusies 13-23, omvattende de stap van het sorteren van de poststukken (1) onder gebruikmaking van de adressendatabase.
- 25. Gegevensdrager voorzien van een computerprogramma dat door een computerinrichting kan worden gelezen en na te zijn ingelezen de computerinrichting de functionaliteit van het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen (44) met geregistreerde adresrecords verschaft onder gebruikmaking van de volgende stappen:
 - het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- het opslaan van de adresgegevens;

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het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen (44) opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen (44) op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

- 26. Computerprogramma dat door een computerinrichting kan worden gelezen en na te zijn ingelezen de computerinrichting de functionaliteit van het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen (44) met geregistreerde adresrecords verschaft onder gebruikmaking van de volgende stappen:
 - het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
 - het opslaan van de adresgegevens;

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gekenmerkt door

het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria, het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen (44) opgeslagen adresrecords, en het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen (44) op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

Uittreksel

Inrichting en werkwijze voor het actualiseren van een adressendatabase in een databasegeheugen (44) met geregistreerde adresrecords onder gebruikmaking van de volgende stappen:

- het ontvangen en verwerken van op poststukken vermelde adresgegevens;
- het opslaan van de adresgegevens;
- het vaststellen van een kwaliteitsmaat voor de adresgegevens op basis van vooraf bepaalde criteria;
- het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de in het databasegeheugen (44) opgeslagen adresrecords; en
 - het actualiseren van de inhoud van het databasegeheugen (44) op basis van de kwaliteitsmaat en het vergelijken van de adresgegevens met de opgeslagen adresrecords.

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[fig. 2]



PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's	or agent's file reference	<u> </u>		
BO 4267	•	FOR FURTHER ACTION	ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
Internation	al application No.	International filing date (day/mon	th/year) Priority date (day/month/year)	
PCT/NL	00/00473	05/07/2000	. 05/07/1999	
Internation B07C3/1	, ,	r national classification and IPC		
Applicant PTT PO:	ST HOLDINGS B.V. et al			
	international preliminary exa s transmitted to the applicar 		ed by this International Preliminary Examining Authority	
2. This	REPORT consists of a total	of 7 sheets, including this cover	sheet.	
b	een amended and are the l		he description, claims and/or drawings which have containing rectifications made before this Authority tions under the PCT).	
Thes	e annexes consist of a total	of sheets.		
3. This	eport contains indications r	elating to the following items:		
ı	☑ Basis of the report	-		
11	☐ Priority			
111				
IV	Lack of unity of inver		,	
V 🗵 Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations suporting such statement				
VI	☐ Certain documents of	•		
VII				
VIII				
Date of sub	mission of the demand	Date of	completion of this report	
02/02/20	02/02/2001 17.04.2001		2001	
	nailing address of the internatio	nal Authori	zed officer	
	European Patent Office			
<i>9</i>))	D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 5236	vanVo	porsttotVoorst,R	
	Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Toloph	200 No. 140 80 0200 0440	

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/NL00/00473

I. Basis of the report

	and		response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" of this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)):					
	1-1	5	as originally filed					
	Cla	nims, No.:						
	1-2	6	as originally filed					
	Dra	awings, sheets:						
	1/4	-4/4	as originally filed					

2.		•	uage, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the nternational application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.					
	The	ese elements were a	vailable or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:					
		the language of a t	ranslation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).					
		the language of pu	blication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).					
		the language of a to 55.2 and/or 55.3).	ranslation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule					
3.			leotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the y examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:					
		contained in the inf	ernational application in written form.					
		filed together with t	he international application in computer readable form.					
		furnished subsequ	ently to this Authority in written form.					
		furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.						
		The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.						
		The statement that listing has been fur	the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence nished.					
١.	The	amendments have	resulted in the cancellation of:					
		the description,	pages:					
		the claims,	Nos.:					

1. With regard to the elements of the international application (Replacement sheets which have been furnished to

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/NL00/00473

		the drawings,	sheets:								
5.		This report has been considered to go bey		•	•			ad not bee	n made, s	since they	/ have beer
		(Any replacement sh report.)	eet contai	ning such	amendm	ents musi	t be refer	red to und	er item 1	and anne	exed to this
6.	Add	itional observations, i	necessar	y:			٠				
V.		soned statement un tions and explanatio			_		Ity, inve	ntive step	or indus	strial app	licability;
1.	Stat	ement						-			
	Nov	elty (N)	Yes: No:	Claims Claims	1-26						

2. Citations and explanations see separate sheet

Industrial applicability (IA)

Inventive step (IS)

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted: see separate sheet

Claims 1-26

Claims 1-26

Claims

Claims

Yes: No:

Yes:

No:

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

Reference is made to the following documents: 1).

> D1: US 5 079 714 A (MANDULEY FLAVIO M ET AL) 7 January 1992 (1992-01-07)

D2: US 5 770 841 A (MOED MICHAEL C ET AL) 23 June 1998 (1998-06-23)

D3: EP 0 673 686 A (ELECTROCOM AUTOMATION LP) 27 September 1995 (1995-09-27)

According to the description of the present application, the invention relates to an installation (Claim 1) for updating an address database with recorded address records comprising at least one processor for receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post, a memory connected thereto for storing said address data, and a central data base memory containing the address database.

In the prior art described in the introductory part of the present application, updating of the address database is based on manual improvement of the address database on the basis of items of post for which the address data read do not correspond to stored address records and which have been rejected by the installation.

The problem to be solved by the present invention relates to updating an address database as automatically as possible. Problems which arise with such an operation are, for example, that the address database will always contain some address data for which the reliability can be improved or which contain small errors.

The aim of the present invention is to obtain data from the address database which is reliable as possible.

The present invention makes use of a quality rating which indicates how good the address data are and which is determined on the basis of predefined criteria. The installation determines completely automatically whether the quality is such that the address database can be updated on the basis of the address data.

The present invention relates to a corresponding method (Claim 13), and to a computer program (Claim 26) that can be read by the installation to provide it with the functionality for updating an address data base, and to a data carrier (Claim 25) provided with said computer program.

- 3). The following features are mentioned in the description with respect of the installation:
- the at least one processor is equipped to determine a quality rating for the a. address data on the basis of predefined criteria, to compare the address data with the address records stored in the database memory and to update the content of the database memory on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored records; wherein the at least one processor:
- b. carries out segmentation/standardisation wherein the address data that have been scanned and called up are split into relevant elements for each item of post, in accordance with predefined rules, and forms an address record from the result; and
- determines, in accordance with a predefined algorithm, an overall recognition C. reliability rating from the data in the address record, and incorporates the rating in the address record; and
- d. determines, in dependence of an expected structure, a segmentation rating, and incorporates the rating in the address record; and wherein
- both ratings are used when actually updating the address records in the central e. database memory in that the at least one processor:
- e1. determines a commonness rating by means of a matching algorithm wherein

individual elements split of from the data record are compared with common data stored in existing data files, and adds the commonness rating to the address record; and

- e2. makes a decision by a rule-based system whether an address record scanned is new, known or unknown, by making use of a quality rating which is based on at least one of the following criteria: segmentation quality, the commonness rating and the overall recognition reliability rating; and
- e3. compares the data record with the information read from the data base memory, and updates the content of the database memory on the basis of said decision.
- 3). The subject-matter of the independent claims is based on the aforementioned features.
- 4). D1 relates to method of and apparatus for improving the processing of mail wherein batch mailings prepared by a mailer before delivery to a postal system are pre-processed to determine the number of non-deliverable addresses versus deliverable addresses in a batch, said addresses having been printed on each piece of mail of the batch from a mailing list of addresses maintained by the mailer.

In detail, after a piece of mail passed a counter and comparator to measure the package dimensions to determine if the piece of mail falls outside the categories that are set by the Post Office for such mail, the weight of the piece of mail is obtained and at least the last line of the address block is read, which gives the city, state and zip code. Certain parameters of the piece of mail are measured such as print contrast, surface reflectivity, and print font style. The readability of the mailing address will be determined based upon the contrast and reflectivity of the mail pieces. This information is stored in memory. The zip codes that are determined from the mail will be compared against a zip data base. If the zip code is not found, an indication as such is stored as undeliverable for bad zip code. In the alternative, one can compare the zip coded city and state to the written city and state address, and if there are any mismatches, it is recorded as being undeliverable.

EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET

The above parameters are determined by preprocessing of the mail before actual introduction into a postal system. The result of the preprocessing is a quality characteristics report categorizing the mail in accordance with its deliverability and the degree of difficulty of its deliverability.

5). The present invention as claimed in independent claims 1, 13, 25, 26 is novel with respect of D1, since the present invention does not relate to the preprocessing of batch mailings, and does not provide, as a result of this preprocessing, a quality characteristics report as in D1, and since D1 does not disclose the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, so as to update an address database.

The difference with the prior art disclosed in D1 is considered to be not obvious to a person skilled in the art.

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art 1). disclosed in the document D1 is not mentioned in the description, nor is this document identified therein.

Richard van Voorst tot Voorst



(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference BO 42677		n of Transmittal of International Search Report V220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.
International application No.	International filing date (day/month/year)	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year)
PCT/NL 00/00473	05/07/2000	05/07/1999
Applicant PTT POST HOLDINGS B.V.		
This International Search Report has bee according to Article 18. A copy is being tra	n prepared by this International Searching Ar ansmitted to the International Bureau.	uthority and is transmitted to the applicant
	of a total of sheets. a copy of each prior art document cited in th	is report.
Basis of the report With regard to the language the	international search was carried out on the b	assis of the international application in the
	ess otherwise indicated under this item.	asis of the international application in the
the international search w Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).	as carried out on the basis of a translation of	f the international application furnished to this
was carried out on the basis of the contained in the internation	e sequence listing : nal application in written form.	international application, the international search
	rnational application in computer readable for this Authority in written form.	orm.
	this Authority in computer readble form.	-
the statement that the sub	psequently furnished written sequence listing illed has been furnished.	does not go beyond the disclosure in the
_		is identical to the written sequence listing has been
2. Certain claims were fou	nd unsearchable (See Box I).	
3. Unity of Invention is lac	dng (see Box II).	
4. With regard to the title,		
the text is approved as su	bmitted by the applicant.	
the text has been establis	hed by this Authority to read as follows:	•
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5. With regard to the abstract,		•
the text is approved as su the text has been establis within one month from the		ority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may,
6. The figur of the drawings to be publ		2
as suggested by the appli	· ·	None of the figures.
X because the applicant fail	•	
because this figure better	characteriz s the invention.	

P L 00/00473

			
A. CLASSI IPC 7	FICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER B07C3/14		
According to	o International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classi	fication and IPC	
B. FIELDS	SEARCHED	-	
Minimum do IPC 7	ocumentation searched (classification system followed by classification by Classification system followed by classification system followed by classification system followed by classification system followed by classifica	ation symbols)	
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Electronic d	lata base consulted during the international search (name of data	pase and, where practical, search terms used)	
EPO-In	ternal, WPI Data, INSPEC		
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C. DOCUM	ENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		****
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the	relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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	abstract column 1, line 55 -column 2, lin	ne 63	
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A .	EP 0 673 686 A (ELECTROCOM AUTOM 27 September 1995 (1995-09-27) abstract	MATION LP)	1,13,25, 26
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Furth	ner documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	χ Patent family members are listed in a	nnex.
° Special ca	tegories of cited documents :	"T" later document published after the internat	ional filing date
	ent defining the general state of the art which is not ered to be of particular relevance	or priority date and not in conflict with the cited to understand the principle or theory invention	
	document but published on or after the international	"X" document of particular relevance; the claim	
"L" docume	not which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or is cited to establish the publication date of another	cannot be considered novel or cannot be involve an inventive step when the docum	ent is taken alone
citation	n or other special reason (as specified) ent referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claim cannot be considered to involve an invent document is combined with one or more of	ve step when the
other n	means	ments, such combination being obvious to in the art.	
	ent published prior to the international filing date but an the priority date claimed	"&" document member of the same patent family	ly
Date of the	actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search	report
2	7 October 2000	06/11/2000	
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	Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Katerbau, R	

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nform patent family members

Interpretonal Application No
P L 00/00473

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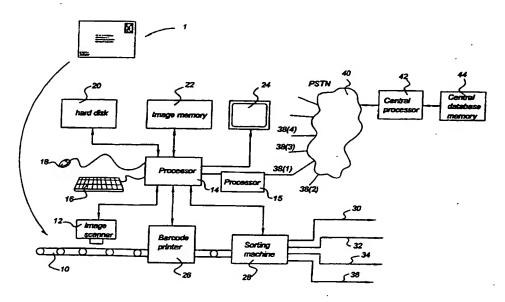
- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): PTT POST HOLDINGS B.V. [NL/NL]; Prinses Beatrixlaan 23, NL-2595 AK Den Haag (NL).
- (72) Inventors; and
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Erik, Wilhelmus, Gilles [NL/NL]; Knobbelzwaansingel 5, NL-2633 AG Nootdorp (NL). VAN DER VEER, Marco, Gerardus [NL/NL]; Swaenepol 9A, NL-6871 TN Renkum (NL). NAUTA, Frank, Auke [NL/NL]; Goedenregenzoom 154, NL-2719 HE Zoetermeer (NL). FRINGS, Helanus, Elisabeth, Rudolph [NL/NL]; Van Bleiswijkstraat 83, NL-2582 LA Den Haag (NL). BRUIJS, Petrus, Adrianua [NL/NL]; Gershwinstraat 1, NL-2807 SG Gouda (NL).

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- (84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: INSTALLATION AND METHOD FOR UPDATING AN ADDRESS DATABASE WITH RECORDED ADDRESS RECORDS



(57) Abstract: Installation and method for updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, making use of the following steps: receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post; storing the address data; the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria; comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory (44); and updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

WO 01/02104 A1

patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

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 Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.



patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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Installation and method for updating an address database with recorded address records

The present invention relates to an installation for updating an address database with recorded address records, comprising:

- at least one processor for receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
- a memory, connected to the at least one processor, for storing the address data;
- a database memory, connected to the at least one processor, containing the address database stored therein.

An installation of this type is disclosed in JP-A 9/57204.

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JP-A 8/323299 relates to an address database management system that is equipped for updating an address database on the basis of returned post on which corrections have been made. The returned post is read by a reader and corrected data are stored in a memory. The management system automatically updates the database on the basis of the data given on the returned post. A post sorting machine that is able to sort post in accordance with the corrected address is coupled to the database management system. This document does not relate to updating existing databases without making use of returned post on which corrections have been made.

JP-A 9/314067 describes a post sorting device and method. A set-up is shown which comprises means for reading address information from the post and generating an address code on the basis of this address information. As an alternative the address information can be entered manually. The address code is compared with the content of an address information database. If the address code does not precisely correspond to an address in the database, the address code and possible correct addresses are displayed to the operator. The operator is then able, for example by comparing the name of the addressee on the post with the names of the addressees in the possible correct addresses, to decide which of the latter is correct. This correct address is then printed on the item of post for further automated sorting. This document works on the assumption that the address database is correct.

JP-A 9/75862 describes a post sorting machine. This comprises a video coding terminal. The machine operator enters a user's code. The machine evaluates the correctness of the user's code by comparison with a database. This document does not mention updating an address database.

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JP-A 9/57204, from which the present claims are delimited, relates to the problem of updating an address database that is used in an automatic post sorting installation.

In such a post sorting installation there is a video coding unit which reads items of post and converts the address data into an address code, for example using an optical character recognition unit. The address code is stored in a memory. During the sorting process the address code is compared with address data stored in an address database. If the comparison shows that the address code corresponds to an address stored in the database, this is then accepted as correct for further sorting.

Some address codes do not correspond to any address in the database. It is then possible to display the image of the item of post recorded by the video coding unit on a screen. The operator of the post sorting installation then studies the information entered on the screen and inputs by hand, for example via a keyboard, the address that has to be used for the subsequent sorting process. However, the said JP-A 9/57204 also proposes updating of the database itself so that errors and/or cases where address codes do not correspond to an address in the database will occur increasingly less frequently.

To this end, JP-A 9/57204 in essence proposes the following: the address codes of the items of post which do not correspond to an address in the database are stored in a memory. The associated rejected items of post are removed via a separate line. At a suitable point in time the rejected items of post are fed into the machine again in order to update the database on the basis of renewed reading. In principle, there can be two different causes for the rejection of the items of post. Firstly, the optical character recognition system may not have recognised one or more characters. Secondly, it can be that all characters have been recognised but that the address code thus established does not correspond to an address in the database.

In the first case the image recorded by the video coding unit is displayed to the system operator. On the basis of this image the operator decides how the incorrect characters have to be corrected. The database is optionally corrected or supplemented via pattern recognition of the address thus corrected by hand. In the second case the database is supplemented with the new address information, which is assumed to be correct.

The problem that is solved by the present invention relates to updating an address database as automatically as possible. Problems which arise with such an operation are, for example, as follows: the address database will always contain some address data for which the reliability can be improved or which contain small errors. Furthermore, many people are

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frequently at a temporary address which is not their home address, for example when they are on holiday or if they have been admitted to hospital for some time. During that period the post for them is sent to an address other than their home address. Nevertheless the address on the post for them is correct and sorting should not be refused. Equally, an address database should not be modified in such a case. Moreover, many people move without informing the postal delivery services of their new home address in time or in the correct manner. In this case modification of the address database is required. Many people also receive post addressed to different addresses, for example because they have a home address and a business address. Finally, the postal delivery services are not aware of any address at all for some people (for example children), whilst that would be useful for monitoring the sorting process.

The aim of the application is first of all to avoid these types of problems as far as possible when updating the address database and to obtain data which are as reliable as possible.

To this end the installation of the type mentioned in the preamble is characterised in that the at least one processor is equipped to determine a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, to compare the address data with the address records stored in the database memory and to update the content of the database memory on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

In the installation of the invention an address database containing recorded address records is thus continually updated on the basis of address data printed on items of post and received by the installation. For this operation these data shown on items of post can optionally be read by people, who then enter these data by hand. Preferably, however, reading of these address data takes place automatically. Automatic reading can be carried out using any technology known for this purpose. Updating of the address database takes place completely automatically and is not, as in the prior art, based on manual improvement of the address database on the basis of items of post for which the address data read do not correspond to stored address records and which have been rejected by the installation. To this end the installation according to the invention makes use of a quality rating which indicates how good the address data are and which is determined on the basis of predefined criteria. The installation determines completely automatically whether the quality is such that the address database can be updated on the basis of the address data.

When updating the address database use can be made of address data read

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automatically for all items of post. Of course, it is, however, also possible to use a selection of these. For example, consideration can be given to random samples or the avoidance of updating the address database during a specific period in which a great deal of post is submitted for unusable addresses, for example the Christmas period. It is also possible, for example, not to process handwritten address data or to disregard address data on postcards.

The present invention also relates to a method for updating an address database in a database memory containing recorded address records, comprising:

- receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
- storing the address data;

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the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory and updating the content of the database memory on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

The present invention also relates to a data carrier provided with a computer program that can be read by a computer installation and, after having been loaded, provides the computer installation with the functionality for updating an address database in a database memory containing recorded address records, making use of the following steps:

- receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
- storing the address data;

characterised by

the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory and updating the content of the database memory on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

The present invention also relates to a computer program that can be read by a computer installation and, after having been loaded, provides the computer installation with the functionality for updating an address database in a database memory containing recorded address records, making use of the following steps:

- receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
- storing the address data;

characterised by

the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria,

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comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory and updating the content of the database memory on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

The invention will be explained below with reference to a few figures which are intended solely to illustrate the invention and not to restrict the scope thereof.

Figure 1 is an example of an item of post that is provided with address data for an addressee and address data for a sender;

Figure 2 is an example of an installation that can be used when updating a database with address records;

Figure 3 is a flowchart showing a few steps during the process for updating address records in a database;

Figures 4, 5 and 6 give further details of a few of the steps shown in Figure 3.

Figure 1 shows an example of a letter which is provided with an addressee's address data 2 and a sender's address data 7. The letter 1 can have been provided with a stamp 8. Instead of a stamp 8 it is also possible for the item to have been franked by machine or the like. As a further alternative the address data can have been provided on the item of post as a supplement or exclusively in the form of a code. Such a code can be a one-dimensional or two-dimensional barcode. The franking value can also have been incorporated in such a code. In that case the code can be termed an "electronic stamp".

The addressee's address data comprise, for example, a name line 3, a company name 4, a street address 5 and a town and postcode 6. The sender's address data can be compiled in a similar manner.

Such a letter 1 can be sorted using an automatic sorting machine. An example of this is shown in Figure 2. The letter 1 is, for example, placed on a conveyor belt 10. The conveyor belt 10 guides the letter 1 past an image scanner 12, which makes an image of that side of the item of post on which the addressee's data 2, and optionally the sender's data 7, are shown. The image scanner 12 sends the recorded image to the processor 14.

After having been scanned by the image scanner 12, the letter 1 is fed by the conveyor belt 10 to a barcode printer 26, which is able to print a barcode on the letter 1. This barcode contains further details which are used in the final sorting. After having been fed through the barcode printer 26, the letter 1 is fed by the conveyor belt 10 to a sorting machine 28, which reads the printed barcode and on the basis of this feeds the letter 1 into a specific route 30, 32, 34, 36

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The image scanner 12, the barcode printer 26 and the sorting machine 28 are connected to a processor 14. The processor 14 is also connected to means by means of which the operator can enter data, such as a mouse 18 and a keyboard 16. The processor 14 is also connected to suitable memories, including, for example, a hard disk 20 and an image memory 22, in which the processor 14 stores the image containing address data, both with regard to the addressee and with regard to the sender (if applicable), read by the image scanner 12.

The processor 14 is also connected to display means 24, for example in the form of a monitor.

The processor 14 automatically controls the image scanner 12, the barcode printer 26 and the sorting machine 28 for the sorting process. The manner in which this takes place is known per se and requires no further explanation here.

In the set-up according to Figure 2 the processor 14 is connected to a telephone network, for example PSTN 40 (public switched telephone network).

As a supplement, an additional processor 15 can be arranged between processor 14 and the PSTN 40, which additional processor 15 is able to relieve the load on processor 14 by, for example, performing the activities with regard to the transmission and receipt of the data via the PSTN. This can include the buffering of data, the establishment of communication with other processors via the PSTN 40 and in particular the performance of one or more operations which are needed in the framework of the present invention and which are not per se already required for the sorting process itself. For example, for the sorting process it will not be necessary to derive the name of the addressee (company name and/or private individual) or the sender's data 7 from the image provided by the image scanner.

A central processor 42 is also connected to PSTN 40. The central processor 42 is also connected to a central database memory 44.

In Figure 2 it is indicated that the processor 14 is connected (optionally via processor 15) to PSTN 40 via a cable 38 (1) and there are several such connections 38 (2), 38 (3), 38(4), These other connections are intended to indicate that several such set-ups with local processors and local sorting means can be connected to the PSTN 40. They are all able to communicate with the central processor 42 via the PSTN 40.

However, it is also conceivable that the invention is used on a local set-up and that the processor 14, optionally together with processor 15, is directly connected to the central database memory 44.

The central database memory 44 comprises a database containing address records.

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Within the context of this invention an address record contains at least one name line 3, a street address 5 and a town and postcode 6. The name on the name line can be the name of an individual but can also be a company name, or both. Sometimes there are two (or more) name lines on which, for example, both the name of an individual and a company name are shown. Of course, it is also possible to incorporate further relevant data in the address record.

Figure 3 shows in broad outline the steps which are taken during updating of address records in the central database memory 44. Roughly the following steps are taken in this operation.

The data on the item of post are submitted to a human and/or mechanical recognition process with the aim of obtaining data on those involved in the postal service.

The image that is stored in image memory 22 is analysed by processor 14, optionally in combination with processor 15, to establish the position of one or more address blocks relating to the addressee and optionally the sender. Each address block is subjected to analyses in which the nature of the lines in the address block is assessed. Each line in the address block is segmented, that is to say an assessment is made of the logically coherent elements from which the line is made up, for example 'initials', or 'street address'. Optionally the content of elements found is standardised, various occurrences being displayed in a standard format.

Each assessment that is made in the recognition process results in an assessment score in which the degree of (un)certainty regarding the recognition result is shown. A poor recognition result may give rise to rejection of the detected result as unusable. In the recognition process use can be made of available verified reference data, in which context consideration can be given to files containing surnames, postcodes, street addresses, towns and collection points found in a specific country, for example The Netherlands. Such reference data are stored in a memory and can be used for a finer assessment of the recognition and possibly even for correction of previous recognition results. For instance, a postcode which is recognised but does not exist can possibly be improved after matching with the verified file of postcodes that do exist.

Figure 3 will now be explained in more detail.

Currently approximately 24 million items of post a day are automatically processed in The Netherlands by means of an automatic post sorting system (APSS) in six different sorting centres. In terms of functionality, one such sorting centre corresponds to the mid section in Figure 2. The image scanner 12 makes a digital image of the address side of each item of post

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1, which image is sent to the processor 14, which stores the image in image memory 22. The address in the digital image is localised by the processor 14 and the address is then read automatically. In a first step in the flowchart in Figure 3, "APSS collection" 46, the address data on the items of post are temporarily stored locally in an image memory 22. The characters present in the address data in the image are established with the aid of optical character recognition (OCR) techniques, which are known per se. A character recognition reliability rating can be determined for conversion of the characters present on the items of post to digital characters, which character recognition reliability rating depends on the accuracy of the character on the item of post, the read process by the image scanner 12 and the quality of the OCR process. Handwritten characters will give a greater likelihood of an incorrect result than printed characters.

Preferably, only those address data which have been machine-written on the item of post 1 and for which the postcode/house number combination 6 has been read correctly are used for updating the address data in the central database 44. For the post sorting process itself, as far as possible all data resulting from the OCR process, including those for handwritten addresses, will, of course, be taken into account. The address data on post with handwritten addresses are preferably considered to be insufficiently reliable for updating the address database in the central database memory 44.

To supplement address data which have been derived from recorded images with the aid of OCR techniques, use can be made of data input manually by people. The data concerned here are, for example, data on items of post for which the processor 14 has established that it is impossible automatically to derive existing address data in respect of street address, postcode and town from the characters in the image. Such items of post are rejected during the sorting process and put on one side for manual processing. An employee processes these items of post by hand in as much as he/she reads the address on the image via the monitor 24 and, via the input means 16, 18, manually enters the address which he/she has established, after which the processor 14 is still able to send the correct instructions to the barcode printer 26 and the sorting machine. It is furthermore conceivable that said employee reads the address data on the original item of post 1 him/herself.

It is also conceivable that address data for updating the central database 44 originating from items of post have been entered manually elsewhere, resulting in a data file containing address data which, for example, are is by floppy disk or via the Internet and is submitted to the central processor 42 after it has been read.

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The central processor 42 is able to communicate via the network connection PSTN 40 (or via any other suitable communication link) with processor 14 (or 15) in order to request the images stored in the image memory 22. After receipt, the central processor 42 can add any administrative data required to the address data scanned. Administrative data consists, for example, of the sorting centre where the address data were scanned, the date the address data were scanned and a serial number. The central processor 42 is then able to store the scanned address data, which have been received, centrally in any suitable memory. This can be, for example, a memory that is separate from the central database memory 44.

After the "APSS collection step" 46 a segmentation/standardisation step 48 is carried out. As shown in Figure 4, in this step the address data that have been scanned and called up (step 482) are split into relevant elements for each item of post. Name lines 3 are selected from the addressee's address data 2, step 483, and split into elements, step 484. Meanings, such as prefix, first name, title, etc. are assigned to the individual elements. The individual elements can then be standardised, various occurrences being displayed in a standard format. If present, the company name 4 is also analysed. An address record containing surnames and/or company names and associated attributes, such as initials, infixes, suffixes, etc., then results.

In accordance with a predefined algorithm, an overall recognition reliability rating is determined from the data in the address record, step 485. The character recognition reliability rating is incorporated as an element in this overall recognition reliability rating. The overall recognition reliability rating also takes account of any writing errors and/or typing errors in the address data on the item of post itself.

A rating for the quality of the segmentation (splitting into individual elements) within the segmentation process is also determined, step 486. Both the overall recognition reliability rating and the segmentation quality are incorporated in the address record. Both ratings, that is to say overall recognition reliability rating and segmentation quality, are subsequently used when actually updating the address records in the central database memory 44.

Commonness 50 is then carried out by the central processor 42 (see Figure 5). To this end the central processor 42 has a file of surnames occurring in The Netherlands. This file is stored in a memory (not shown) connected to the central processor 42. Each surname that has been split off from the address data with the aid of step 48 is compared with existing surnames in step 501 and is tested for conformity to syntax rules in step 502. The same operation is carried out with first names and any company names present. With the aid of a

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predefined algorithm, a commonness rating for each surname, first name and any company name is determined and is added to the address record, step 503.

The street address data 5 (or P.O. Box numbers) and the combination of postcode and town 6 are checked by the processor 14 as soon as they have been displayed with the aid of image scanner 12 to determine whether they exist, because these data are needed for the post sorting process. In current practice house number suffixes, such as "top", "back", "second floor", "II", etc., are not checked. In step 52 "addressing" these house number suffixes are standardised with the aid of a list of frequently occurring abbreviations. For example, "TO" ("opp") is synonymous with "tegenover" ("opposite"). "1-hoog" ("first floor") is, for example, synonymous with "1°" ("1st") and with "i".

In step 52 the central processor 42 checks whether there are corresponding data in the database stored in the central database memory 44 for each combination of street or road name, number, postcode and town. If this is not the case, the address displayed is "new". This fact is added to the address record scanned (step 522).

The central processor 42 then reads from the central database in the central database memory 44 all names recorded in the address (including suffixes) in an address record that has been scanned. The names 3, 4 scanned are compared with the names recorded in the central database. If possible any initials, first names, prefixes, surnames and suffixes are compared with one another. Each name 3, 4 scanned for an addressee is assigned a comparison score in which the quality and the results of comparisons with the various components of the recorded name, that is to say initials, prefixes, first name, surname, suffixes, etc., are incorporated.

On the basis of the comparison scores, the segmentation quality, the commonness rating and the overall recognition reliability rating for the address data scanned, the central processor 42 decides whether an address record scanned is new, known or unknown. For this operation use is made of a quality rating which preferably is based on at least one of the following criteria: segmentation quality, the commonness rating and the overall recognition reliability rating. The quality rating can be, for example, the arithmetic mean of these three criteria together. The assignment of the status "new", "known" or "unknown" can, for example, take place in accordance with the following rules:

- the address data scanned are new if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively high;
- the address data scanned are known if the comparison scores are relatively high and the

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quality rating is relatively high;

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- the address data scanned are unknown if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively low.

The assignment of this status takes place in step 56 "decision".

The statistics for known address records are updated in the same step. This will be discussed in more detail below.

The central processor 42 can generate a new address record in the central database memory 44 for a new and/or unknown address record.

The following steps can, for example, be taken for updating statistical data relating to address records already known.

The frequency with which a data element occurs can be recorded per sorting centre, so that the spread of an address element can be determined. It is also possible to record the date on which an address record was last read in one of the sorting centres. In this way it is possible to record in the central database the dates in, for example, the past year, on which a particular address record occurred somewhere on an item of post. The interval between two successive times that the address record was used on an item of post can then be determined. In order to determine this interval it is possible, for example, to check a recent period or a period in the more distant past. It is also possible to determine the average length of time between two successive times that the address record was read in one of the sorting centres. If the average period changes substantially in the course of time this can be an indication that the address record has to be amended.

It is also possible that the sender's address data 7 are recorded and stored in a memory. The sender's data 7 can then be used when determining the value of the quality rating. After all, it can be assumed that items of post which originate from, for example, a local authority's registry office contain very reliable addressee address data 2. Preferably, destination addresses which originate from the database 44 itself are not used to determine the degree of reliability of addresses in the database 44.

If the senders' address data are stored it is also possible to record whether an address element is frequently despatched from the same address. If a destination address is frequently used from only one sender's address, the reliability does not have to be high. The more senders' addresses that use the same destination address the greater will be the reliability.

On the basis of the data each address record can be assigned a status, for example new, common, reliable or old. For this purpose the following rules can, for example, apply. When

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an address record is compiled for the first time it is given the status new. An address record becomes common when it is received several times from different senders and/or from different sorting centres. A common address record can be reliable if the address record is encountered regularly on items of post. The regularity is determined on the basis of the average interval between two successive times that the address record is read on an item of post. It can be determined that a reliable address record reverts to common if the average duration of said interval becomes longer than a predefined period. If an address record is no longer encountered it acquires the status old.

If the interval between recent times that an address record is encountered on an item of post becomes increasingly long this is an indication that, for example, the addressee has moved and it can be decided that the address record should lapse.

Example

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An example of a recognition process will now be explained. It is presumed that only data where a valid postcode has been read are submitted. The address block read is, for example:

BTT Port Redapersice

Pohtnus 5838

20 5858GJ Riksdijk

NL

whilst the following appears on the item of post 1 that has been read:

PTT Post Mediaservice

Postbus 5858

5858GJ Rijswijk

NL

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Each character has been read with a certain recognition reliability and an average recognition reliability rating can thus be determined for each line. This is, for example, 60% for the first line, 75% for the second line and, for example, 65% for the last line. The overall recognition reliability rating could then be the average of 60%, 75% and 65% = 66.6%. As an alternative the first line could also be said to be decisive when determining the recognition reliability.

In this case segmentation leads to three lines. Three words are differentiated in the first line, two words in the second line and again two words, plus a separate attribute, in the third

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line. Assuming a postcode and town in the third line of the address, the third line is given a low segmentation score, if only because of the large space between two elements (Riksdijk and NL), of, for example, 40%. The second line ought to contain road or street name and number (and optionally a suffix) and is given a high segmentation score since the structure corresponds to that expected; for example 90%. The first line contains three elements of three, four and eleven characters and thus has a good structure for a surname or a company name. The segmentation score is, for example, 80%. An average segmentation score is 70%.

No known prefixes, infixes or suffixes are encountered in the name line, nor are any titles or anything similar. This indicates that a company name is involved here. In the second line a check is made to establish whether there is a suffix to the house number and if so what this is. In this example there is no suffix and it will be recognised that what is concerned here is a P.O. Box. There is thus little to standardise.

Commonness testing could consist in matching with existing personal or company names. Matching will yield a certain score. The score is 100% in the case of complete correspondence and the score is 0% if completely different. Comparison with the name "PTT Post Mediaservice" could, for example, yield a score of 65%, whilst the results of comparison with "PTT Post Brieven" is 25% and with Sijthof Pers is 0%.

The comparison score can be calculated via a matching algorithm, but then by comparison with names of individuals and/or companies registered at the address read (Postbus 5858). The latter could be, for example, the following companies: PTT Post Mediaservice, DMdata and Dataprofs. The match with PTT Post Mediaservice is 65% and that with DMdata and Dataprofs is 0%. The comparison score with PTT Post Mediaservice is obviously the highest.

A rule-based system will now determine whether in the present case (66.6% reliability, 70% segmentation, 65% commonness, 65% comparison score) the data element must be qualified as known, unknown or new. The requirement for a new data element can be, for example, that a quality rating (for example the average of overall recognition reliability rating, segmentation and commonness) is greater than 80% and that the comparison score is lower than 80%. The requirement for a known data element can be, for example, that the quality rating and the comparison score are higher than 95%. Everything that falls outside this can be qualified as unknown.

Further embodiments

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Figure 2 shows the situation where the central database memory has one database. However, it is also possible on the basis of the database in the central database memory to make an additional database that contains a selection of the address records from the complete central database. This selection takes place on the basis of specific decision rules. For example, only those address records for which the reliability is in excess of a specific threshold value are incorporated in this selection of address records. These reliable address records can then, for example, be made available for use by third parties.

In the case where an additional database containing a selection of the data from the central database memory is provided, there can be a provision that, as an additional decision rule for inclusion in the additional database memory, selection must be in accordance with the relevant regulations under privacy legislation. In order to store data in accordance with privacy legislation the central database itself can be incorporated in a black box. The data stored therein can then be accessed only via secure output routines, for example likewise incorporated in the black box. In this context it is possible, for example, to provide for the use of an, optionally public, electronic key.

Thus, in the decision-making process with regard to the usability of an address data element that has been scanned, use is preferably made of (1) the frequency of the occurrence thereof, (2) the variation therein and (3) the spread with regard to senders. In principle, a rule-based system can be set up for this purpose. As an alternative, the central processor 42 can be provided with a neural network or the like. In general it will be the case that an address data element is the better usable the more recently it has been read on an item of post, if it occurs sufficiently frequently (is common), the greater the number of different senders from which it is received (common) and the higher the quality thereof, for example indicated by the segmentation quality and the recognition reliability rating.

An embodiment in which the steps for updating the central database are carried out by the central processor 42 has been described above. As previously mentioned, these steps can, however, also be carried out by the processor 14 (or, optionally, partially by processor 15), specifically when the database to be updated is an address database which exists solely locally and which is stored in a memory that is connected to the processor 14 (or 15).

Additional possibilities for the installation and method described are as follows.

The sender's address data 7 can be scanned when the image scanner 12 is used for display. The processor 14 can, for example, establish that the sender's address data 7 correspond to those for PTT POST (or the sorting office) itself. The data originating from the

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latter will correspond to the data in the central database memory 44. Such data are preferably not incorporated in the image memory 22 in order to prevent possible errors in the central database memory 44 confirming themselves every time.

Job titles of people are sometimes specified on items of post in addition to titles and the like for names in name lines 3. These data can also be stored in the central database memory 44. These job titles can be of importance when compiling the said additional database.

Of course, the central database 44 can also be used during the sorting process that has been explained above.

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Claims

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- 1. Installation for updating an address database with recorded address records, comprising:
 - at least one processor (14, 15, 42) for receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;

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- a memory (22), connected to the at least one processor (14, 15, 42), for storing the address data;
- a database memory (44), connected to the at least one processor (14, 15, 42), containing the address database stored therein;

characterised in that

the at least one processor (14, 15, 42) is equipped to determine a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, to compare the address data with the address records stored in the database memory (44) and to update the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

- 2. Installation according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine a reliability rating for recognition of the address data and partly to base the quality rating on the reliability rating for recognition.
- 3. Installation according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to select name lines from the address data, to split the name lines into individual elements in accordance with predefined rules and partly to base the quality rating on the selection of name lines and the splitting thereof.
- 4. Installation according to Claim 3, further comprising stored common names, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to compare the individual elements of the name lines with the common names, to establish a commonness rating on the basis thereof and partly to base the quality rating on the commonness rating.
- 5. Installation according to Claim 3 or 4, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to derive a name for an addressee from the name lines, to derive an address for the addressee

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from the address data, to read registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and to compare these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, to determine a comparison score per registered name, a comparison score having a higher value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name.

6. Installation according to Claim 5, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are new if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively high.

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- 7. Installation according to Claim 5 or 6, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are known if the comparison scores are relatively high and the quality rating is relatively high.
- 15 8. Installation according to Claim 5, 6 or 7, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to determine that the address data are unknown if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively low.
- Installation according to one of Claims 6 to 8, wherein the at least one processor is
 equipped to generate an additional address record, containing the address data, in the address database if the address data are new.
 - 10. Installation according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one processor is equipped to record one of the following four statuses per address record:
- status new, if the address record is generated;
 - status common, if the associated address data are received from different senders;
 - status reliable, if the associated address data are regularly read afresh;
 - status old, if the address record lapses.
- 30 11. Installation according to one of the preceding claims, wherein the address database is stored with security, such that either the data stored in the central database can be processed only via predefined rules or some of the data stored in the central database can be accessed via a predefined output routine.

12. Installation according to one of the preceding claims, further comprising post sorting units (26, 28) for automatic sorting of the items of post (1) making use of the address database.

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- 13. Method for updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, comprising:
 - receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
 - storing the address data;
- 10 characterised by

the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory (44) and updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

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- 14. Method according to Claim 13, comprising the step for determining a reliability rating for recognition of the address data and partly basing the quality rating on the reliability rating for recognition.
- 20 15. Method according to Claim 13 or 14, comprising the steps for selecting name lines from the address data, splitting the name lines into individual elements in accordance with predefined rules and partly basing the quality rating on the selection of name lines and the splitting thereof.
- 25 16. Method according to Claim 15, comprising the steps for comparing the individual elements of the name lines with common names, establishing a commonness rating on the basis thereof and partly basing the quality rating on the commonness rating.
- 17. Method according to Claim 15 or 16, comprising the steps for deriving a name for an addressee from the name lines, for deriving an address for the addressee from the address data, reading registered names of persons residing at that address from the address database and comparing these with the name of the addressee and, on the basis of that comparison, determining a comparison score per registered name, a comparison score having a higher

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value the greater the degree of correspondence between the name of the addressee and a respective registered name.

- 18. Method according to Claim 17, comprising the step for determining the address data are new if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively high.
 - 19. Method according to Claim 17 or 18, comprising the step for determining that the address data are known if the comparison scores are relatively high and the quality rating is relatively high.

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- 20. Method according to Claim 17, 18 or 19, comprising the step for determining that the address data are unknown if the comparison scores are relatively low and the quality rating is relatively low.
- 15 21. Method according to Claim 18, 19 or 20, comprising the step for generating an additional address record, containing the address data, in the address database if the address data are new.
- 22. Method according to Claim 21, comprising the step for recording one of the following20 four statuses per address record:
 - status new, if the address record is generated;
 - status common, if the associated address data are received from different senders;
 - status reliable, if the associated address data are regularly read afresh;
 - status old, if the address record lapses.

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23. Method according to one of Claims 13 - 22, wherein the address database is stored with security, such that either the data stored in the central database can be processed only via predefined rules or some of the data stored in the central database can be accessed via a predefined output routine.

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24. Method according to one of Claims 13 - 23, comprising the step for sorting items of post (1) making use of the address database.

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- 25. Data carrier provided with a computer program that can be read by a computer installation and, after having been loaded, provides the computer installation with the functionality for updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, making use of the following steps:
 - receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
 - storing the address data;

characterised by

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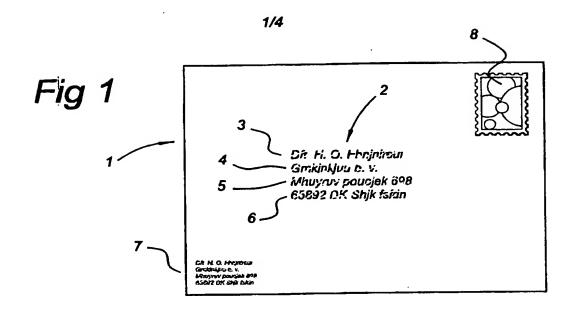
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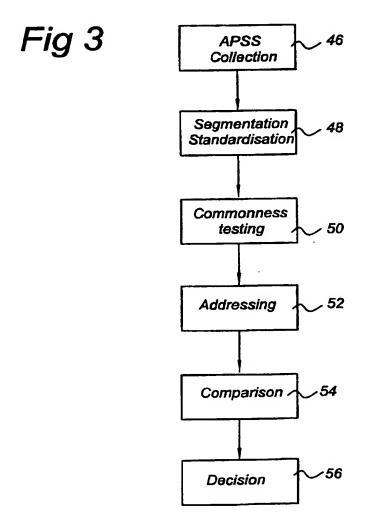
the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory (44) and updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.

- 26. Computer program that can be read by a computer installation and, after having been loaded, provides the computer installation with the functionality for updating an address database in a database memory (44) containing recorded address records, making use of the following steps:
 - receiving and processing address data as shown on items of post;
 - storing the address data;

characterised by

the determination of a quality rating for the address data on the basis of predefined criteria, comparison of the address data with the address records stored in the database memory (44) and updating the content of the database memory (44) on the basis of the quality rating and the comparison of the address data with the stored address records.





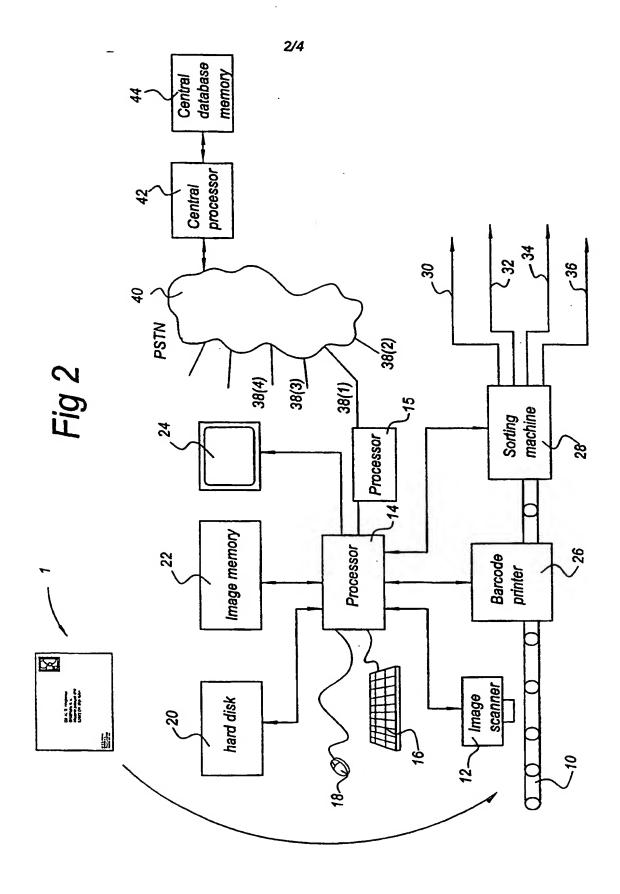
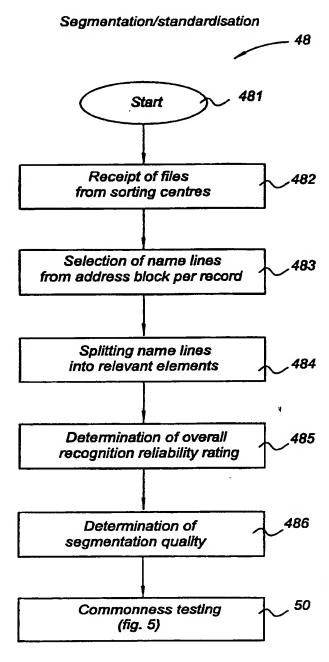
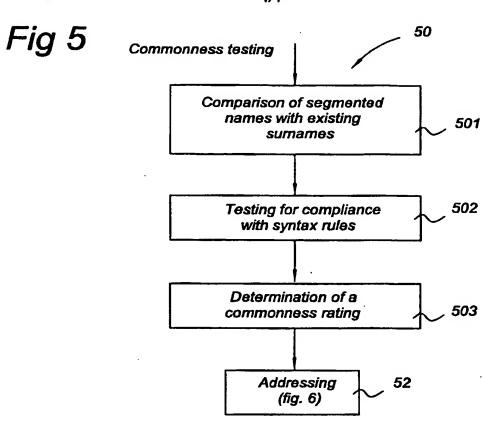


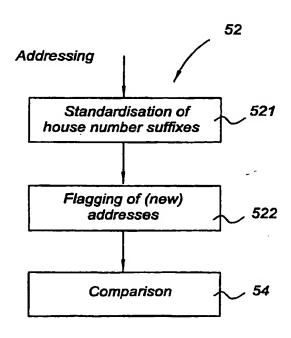
Fig 4











Inten nai Application No PCT/NL 00/00473

A. CLASSII IPC 7	FICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER B07C3/14		
According to	International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification	ation and IPC	
B. FIELDS	SEARCHED		
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4 10	ata base consulted during the international search (name of data base ternal, WPI Data, INSPEC	se and, where practical, search term:	s used)
C. DOCUM	ENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the rel	evant passages	Relevant to claim No.
х	US 5 079 714 A (MANDULEY FLAVIO M 7 January 1992 (1992-01-07) abstract column 1, line 55 -column 2, line		1-26
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Α	EP 0 673 686 A (ELECTROCOM AUTOMA 27 September 1995 (1995-09-27) abstract 	TION LP)	1,13,25, 26
Furt	ner documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	· Patent family members are	listed in annex.
1. Carried as	Associate of situal descriptions:		
"A" docume consid	ent defining the general state of the art which is not lered to be of particular relevance	T" later document published after th or priority date and not in conflic cited to understand the principle invention	et with the application but or theory underlying the
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Date of the	actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the internation	nal search report
2	7 October 2000	06/11/2000	
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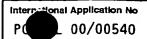
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EP 0673686	Α	27-09-1995	US 5422821 A DE 69422384 D DE 69422384 T EP 0949014 A ES 2141779 T US 5703783 A	03-02-2000 03-08-2000 13-10-1999 01-04-2000

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

International application No. International filling date (day/month/year) (Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year)	Applicant's or agent's file reference	(Form PCT/ISA/2	of Transmittal of International Search Report (20) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.
Applicant NUBIS B.V. et al. This international Search Report has been prepared by this international Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the international Bureau. This international Search Report has been prepared by this international Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the international Bureau. This international Search Report consists of a total of		ACTION	
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A. CLASSI IPC 7	FICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER E06B9/02 E05B65/00 E06B9/04	4	
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IPC 7	ocumentation searched (classification system followed by classification E06B E05B	ion symbols)	·
Documentat	tion searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that s	such documents are included in the fields sea	amhed
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C. DOCUMI	ENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the rel	evant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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		"T" later document published after the interr or priority date and not in conflict with the	
conside	nt defining the general state of the art which is not ered to be of particular relevance	cited to understand the principle or the invention	
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Date of the a	ctual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international seam	ch report
27	7 October 2000	06/11/2000	
Name and m	nailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2	Authorized officer	
	NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,	Peschel. G	

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